



BRAVE ROBBIE'S WEDDING JOY

Report by Rob Cox

'LOVE casts out fear'. That was the poignant message as Robbie Eves married his fiancée just months after being diagnosed with stage four cancer.

Surrounded by friends and family in St Thomas' Church in Stourbridge on Saturday, Robbie and his partner Gemma vowed to love, comfort, honour and protect one another.

After he was diagnosed with stage four bowel and liver cancer earlier this year, the decision was made to bring the wedding forward.

Robbie's mother Judie Eves said: "They have been engaged for four years and they always intended to get married in September this



Gemma and Robbie

year. With Robbie's diagnosis it was all put on hold and then it was decided to bring it all forward. It was arranged very quickly in a matter of two or three weeks."

The couple started going out when teenagers, 16 years on they have two sons Ruaridh, four, and Euan, 21 months.

In an emotional and moving service, Rev Andrew Sillis told them: "You two have got a much better idea of what the future holds than most couples have prior to their marriage. In your situation many people would be afraid but what I see in you two is no fear at all."

Strength

"The strength you have in life for one another, that is indescribably admirable. Love casts out fear."

Rugby player Robbie, 34, from Stourbridge, has played at Stourbridge RFC since the age of six. He progressed through every age level to colts and was part of a successful team which won The North Midlands Cup when he was 16. He also played for his school team, Oldswinford Hospital School including a rugby tour of Australia in 2000.

Robbie, who became a software engineer, continued to represent Stourbridge Rugby Club at senior level. He also played for county team Hereford and Worcester.

Sixty players have already signed up to take to the field in a benefit match to be held on July 22 at Stourbridge RFC from 7pm. Money raised will go towards a trust fund for Gemma and the boys and for any treatment which can help Robbie. To help contact club president John Slim on 07989 786913 or visit www.justgiving.com/for/HelpingRobbieThroughRugby.

RACE FOR LIFE BRINGS OUT THE CROWDS AT HIMLEY



In the pink – The cancer charity fundraising Race for Life gets under way in the grounds of Himley Hall, near Dudley, on Sunday

THE pink army descended on Himley Hall on Sunday to take part in the 5km Race for Life in aid of Cancer Research UK and to remember loved ones lost to cancer.

Woman of all ages gathered at the starting line in the grounds of the stately home near Dudley as the race got under way at 11am.

Runners were in cheerful spirits as organisers warmed up the crowds on stage with a series of entertaining workouts. A minute's silence was held just before the run to remember those family and friends who died from cancer.

Many of the runners were homemade T-shirts with pictures of loved ones on whose behalf they were running to battle the disease.

It was the eighth year in a row for Dudley woman Sarah Trevis, who was joined by her daughter, sister-in-law and friend as they joined hundreds of runners in the 2016 fundraising event.

Sarah, aged 37, came dressed for the occasion as she sported a bright pink wig and face paint alongside a pink costume.

Sarah said: "I was running in memory of

my father-in-law, who passed away two years ago, and my uncle and my mom."

"My daughter Jessica, who is seven, who took part in the event with me, which was her second time of entering the event."

She added: "The first time I did it my mom had passed away and over the years my uncle and my father-in-law also passed away."

Participants can choose to either walk, jog or run around the course, which is the equivalent to just over three miles.

● More pictures – see pages 2 and 16

ATTACK

Police appeal after man is stabbed

POLICE are investigating after a 29-year-old man was stabbed in the neck.

The attack took place on Saltwells Road in Netherton.

The man was treated for injuries at Russells Hall Hospital after making his own way there.

A police spokesman said: "Police are investigating. Inquiries are on-going."

"Anyone with information should call police on 101."

The incident happened last Friday (July 8) shortly after 8.45pm

ROADS

Motorists set to endure delays

MOTORISTS are facing major traffic delays with a major route into Stourbridge set to become one-way for almost two weeks.

Diversions will be in place as part of a resurfacing scheme on the busy A491 High Street, Amblecote.

From July 25 traffic will only be able to travel south on High Street towards Stourbridge town centre from its junction with Collis Street. Drivers wanting to head north towards Kingswinford will be diverted through Wollaston.

POLITICS

Etheridge mulls over leader bid

EURO MP Bill Etheridge says he is considering putting himself forward as a candidate to succeed Nigel Farage as UKIP leader.

The West Midlands MEP, who is also a Sedgley councillor, said he is concerned that the other candidates are 'too far left' following deputy leader Paul Nuttall's decision not to stand.

Mr Etheridge said: "Paul not standing leaves me with a major problem. I have a very clear set of views and opinions that are not represented by the people that are contenders to lead UKIP. I have a decision to make, step aside, or do I make a stand?"

INSIDE

JOKER JAKE IS GOING APE



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Gardner pleaded guilty to poor practice, was found guilty on four charges of fraud and not guilty of aggressive commercial practice. He was bailed until July 28 and issued with an interim ban on going door-to-door offering his services.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Indoor market is here to stay

THERE is no prospect of Brierley Hill's indoor market closing following the sale of the town's historic market hall, its manager insists.

Wayne Jones said he wanted to calm any fears about the future of the indoor market. The building was put up for sale in May by the family firm, which have owned it for generations. Estate agents said there has already been strong interest. It is believed it could sell for as much as £1 million.

Mr Jones said: "There is no intention that it will be anything other than a market."

Two vehicles in collision at Lye

A WOMAN was taken to hospital after a two-car smash in Lye.

Emergency services were called to the crash in Dudley Road at 9.15am on Thursday.

Debris was scattered at the scene following the collision and crews had to remain at the site to make the area safe.

Paramedics treated one woman, believed to be aged in her 50s, at the scene before she was taken to Russells Hall Hospital as a precautionary measure. Two passengers were uninjured.

Sponsor a £100 seat for venue

CAMPAIGNERS bidding to restore Dudley Hippodrome are looking to raise funds by allowing individuals and companies to sponsor seats.

Black Country Hippodrome Ltd has taken over the Castle Hill landmark after saving it from bulldozers.

The new fundraising scheme will allow individuals to pay £100 to sponsor a seat and firms to give £250 towards restoration work. Email info@thebch.co.uk to contact the group.

Feel-good songs from a community choir

THE sounds of summer will fill Dudley Town Hall for a fundraising concert on Saturday.

Community choir Got 2 Sing, comprising singers from Stourbridge and Wolverhampton, are busy rehearsing for the event in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice. Beth Dunn, founder and director of Got 2 Sing, said: "It promises to be a truly feel good evening."

Tickets are available by e-mailing info@got2sing.co.uk or calling 03330 146 164.

Priory Road closures

A MAJOR road heading into Dudley town centre will close overnight for two night next month.

Priory Road will close between the Birmingham New Road and Berry Road on August 6 and 7 (Saturday and Sunday) between 11pm and 6.30am for resurfacing work.

Grannies in line-up to celebrate special day

HUNDREDS will be heading to Dudley's Stone Street Square on Saturday for the town's Black Country Festival celebrations.

Street entertainers, music, stalls and many more activities all feature in a packed programme for the town centre from 11am to 6pm.

Events have already been taking place across the Black Country as part of the month-long festival which includes the official Black Country Day today (Thursday, July 14).

In Dudley events will be taking place in the market place and Stone Street Square which includes a visit from the Fizzogs comedy theatre group, street entertainers, poetry, arts and crafts stalls and music on the stage.

James Stevens, chairman of the Black Country Festival organising committee, said: "There is something for everyone on the day."

Saturday is also Black Country Beer Day 2016, a public transport tour of some of the Black Country areas pubs. It is organised by the Dudley and South Staffordshire CAMRA and Stourbridge and Halesowen CAMRA.

On Monday Stourbridge FC take on Kidderminster Harriers FC in The Worcester Senior Cup at the War Memorial Athletic Ground on the High Street, Ambleside, Stourbridge.

Then on July 23 Dudley Town FC face Worcester City FC at The Dell Stadium at 3pm.

The festival closes between July 29 to 31 with the inaugural Dudley Beer Festival at Brierley Hill Civic Hall.

Monster night out at the castle

DUDLEY Castle will be the atmospheric backdrop for an outdoor screening of a classic black and white horror movie this summer.

The Bride of Frankenstein, directed by Dudley-born Hollywood movie maker James Whale, will be screened on Saturday, August 6, at an event entitled Dudley Castle After Dark, as part of Birmingham-based Flatpack Film Festival's Black Country Pop-up Film Tour.

The 1935 movie stars Boris Karloff as the Monster. The audience are invited to bring a blanket or chair.

Tickets cost £10 (£8 concessions) for the 8pm screening. The film is a PG and runs for 75 minutes. Tickets are available from flatpackfestival.org.uk/event/bride-of-frankenstein

Lace exhibition at cone cancelled

THE Lace Guild Exhibition due to be held at the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley has been cancelled.

To learn more about the Lace Guild visit www.laceguild.org website.

Blow for charity as council cuts funding

THE charity which runs the Beacon Centre for the Blind has been left reeling after £250,000 worth of vital council funding was withdrawn.

Bosses at the charity, which supports blind and partially sighted people across the Black Country, said they are 'devastated'.

Dudley Council defended its move saying it is having to make difficult decisions due to huge funding cuts from the Government.

The charity offers care for residents who stay at its independent living centre in Sedgley and Beacon Court housing complex on the Wolverhampton Road. Its also runs an activity centre in Hagley Road, Oldswinford.

Beacon Centre chief executive Arwyn Jones said:

"We are devastated and disappointed that Dudley Council has completely withdrawn its funding and are very concerned. The Beacon Centre will now explore how best it can sustain its services and the charity is now starting a consultation with users."

The cuts represent around a 50 per cent drop in the centre's contract income for support and care across three services, although not the whole of its operation.

As a result bosses said donations and fundraising efforts are now more vital than ever.

Councillor Qadar Zada, Dudley cabinet member for adult social care, said: "In the context of unprecedented cuts to funding from central Government we have been forced to review the services we cur-

rently commission. This has led to difficult decisions where we do not have the budget for the range of services we previously offered and has led to a reduction of £3 million in our budget.

"We value all the work done by the voluntary sector and recognise it as a key partner for the local authority in supporting us to deliver services differently in the future. We have previously set out our vision of a £2.4m re-commissioning of services and we would very much welcome voluntary sector input into the implementation of this.

"We appreciate the significant anxiety and concern the changes are causing in the voluntary sector and we will continue to work with them to ensure that we protect care services for local people."

Illegal immigrant is jailed over cannabis

POLICE uncovered a £110,000 cannabis farm in Stourbridge after the smell of the drug wafted down the street, a court heard.

A house in Burns Close had white plastic blotting out some of the windows and when officers called on June 6 they spotted a curtain twitch but nobody answered their knock on the front door, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

A first-floor window was open and when a policeman climbed up a ladder to investigate, he came face to face with Shkelqim Skarai, who was persuaded to let them in.

But the Albanian national made a bolt for it as soon as he opened the door.

He was caught after a chase on foot, explained Mr Lal Amarasinghe, prosecuting.

The 25-year-old, who turned out to be an illegal immigrant, was taken to the Oldbury custody suite while the house was searched by officers.

A total of 233 cannabis plants, capable of producing a drug crop worth £113,000, were under cultivation in three rooms of the property and the electricity supply had been bypassed to provide power for the high powered lighting and extractor unit.

Mr Amarasinghe said that police were checking fingerprints found at the scene in a bid to trace others involved in the drug farm.

Water

Skarai admitted entering the country illegally and said he was promised £1,000 if he remained at the address to feed and water the plants.

Mr Simon Burch, defending, said: "He knows very little about producing cannabis but did what he was told. He had been at the house for less than a month and had not been paid a penny, although he had been given some food."

Skarai, of no fixed address, admitted producing cannabis and was sent to prison for 12 months. He is expected to be deported on his release.

Judge Kristina Montgomery QC said: "You are an illegal immigrant who came here to find work but, when you could not do that, you took an offer to play a maintenance role in a relatively sophisticated set up growing cannabis."

"You were offered a substantial amount of money although you may never have received it."

Teenagers' event hailed a success



Artist Antonia Simmonds, aged 17, with some of her work that was on display at the teenage market

A TEENAGE market held at Wordsley's Red House Glass Cone has been hailed a huge success.

Budding young traders took part in the Teenage Market earlier this month, attracting large crowds to browse stall selling a variety of items including handmade jewellery and homemade cakes.

The market, part of a growing nationwide initiative for young entrepreneurs, was held to give young people the chance to de-

velop their business skills and showcase their talents

Each stall was granted free for the traders to use and they were able to keep all profits.

Buskers

Slots were also offered to buskers and performers.

Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Mohammed Hanif and the Mayor-ess visited the event.

Councillor Hanif said: "The young people were so enthusiastic, warm and engaging. We clearly have some creative and canny business minds in our midst."

Interest is now high for the second teenage market due to be held at the Red House Glass Cone on November 26 and 27.

For more information or to apply for a stall at the event visit www.theteenagemarket.co.uk website.

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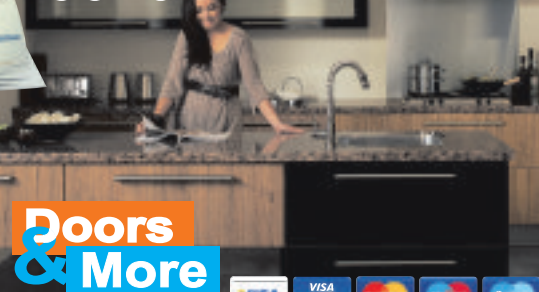
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IT is no longer enough to warn workers that items are weighty. Health & safety now demands they must also be informed if the item is difficult to handle, hence the discarded building-site bags spotted by a reader intriguingly marked: "Heavy and awkward." How long before we see that logo on T-shirts? I want one.

FUNNY things, noses. I was writing in my garret this week and was suddenly overwhelmed with a desire for chips. Why this sudden lust? Downstairs, Mrs Rhodes was cleaning the windows with vinegar and water.

I WAS reminded of the days when I started commuting to Birmingham and would find myself thinking of cold meats; ham, turkey, rare beef and so on. It was some weeks before I realised the big building next to Aston Expressway was the HP Sauce factory.

AT this stage I was going to coin a new word for the link between smells and memory. Sadly, according to Google, others have beaten me to it: nosetalgia.

A READER tells me of his disappointment at his team losing in a pub quiz. It was the geography section that finished them: "We knew that Sri Lanka used to be Ceylon. We remembered that Zimbabwe used to be Rhodesia. We knew that Thailand used to be Siam. But we forgot that Iceland used to be Bejam."

SOMEONE accidentally leaves a microphone switched on, capturing Tory veteran Ken Clarke describing Theresa May as "difficult." Having met Clarke a couple of times, I don't recall him being backward in coming forward, off the



record or not. I wouldn't be surprised if Clarke knew perfectly well the microphone was live. My abiding memory of Ken Clarke is at a buffet luncheon. Most politicians nibble politely at such events. Ken ate all the pies.

FROM the front page of the Daily Telegraph this week, in a report where Boris Johnson is singing the praises of the potential Tory leader Andrea Leadsom: "She is level-headed, trustworthy, approachable and the possessor of a good Continued on Page 4." Never have three pages been turned so quickly. And on page four? "Sense of humour." So that's a relief.

MEANWHILE, in a weekend column raging against Brexit, one commentator warns that quitting the EU would turn Britain into "a dimly-lit, poverty-stricken, festering mess of sargis, mud and minority-bashing incidents on the bus home every evening." And who is this champion of public transport and defender of minorities? Jeremy Clarkson.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Guided tours around stately home

VISITORS will be given the chance to see behind the scenes at Himley Hall during a summer season of guided tours.

Rooms that are not usually open to the public at the historic venue will be open.

Guides will give an insight into the life and times of Himley Hall including tales of the many royal visitors.

The guided tours take in the serv-

ants' quarters, the butler's sitting room and the Earl of Dudley's bedroom. Visitors can also see the refurbished north wing complete with art deco-style swimming pool room and cinema bar.

The tour of the hall lasts for around 90 minutes and is followed by tea, coffee and homemade biscuits.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and eco-

nomic development said: "Himley Hall is a beautiful building with a remarkable history. Although it frequently welcomes people through its doors for events, weddings, afternoon teas and exhibitions, there are some parts of the hall which aren't typically open to the public.

"These behind the scenes tours provide a fascinating insight into the life of the hall, its architecture,

esteemed visitors and varied history. I'm sure visitors will find it an interesting experience."

Tours cost £7.35 per person with refreshments. They start at 7.15pm and 7.30pm on selected Wednesdays and Thursdays this summer, including July 20, 21 and 28; August 4, 10, 17, 18, 24 and 31 August and September 1. Places must be booked in advance by calling (01384) 817817.

Rogue police officers have nowhere to hide

By Jordan Harris

WEST Midlands Police has pledged there is 'no hiding place' for rogue officers who abuse their position.

This comes after a report revealed the number of sacked officers.

The warning follows the publication of the Disapproved Register detailing the number of police officers that have been sacked, resigned or retired while under investigation for serious breaches of the police code of conduct.

A total of 833 officers, ranging in rank from constable to chief superintendent, are on the register, which covers the period from December 2013 to November 2015.

The number includes 25 officers dismissed by West Midlands Police for gross misconduct, plus three who resigned before gross misconduct hearings but were believed to have had a case to answer.

West Midlands Police's head of professional standards, Chief Superintendent Andy Nicholson said: "Our officers swear an oath to serve the people of the West Midlands with fairness, integrity, diligence and impartiality. The overwhelming majority of our officers are loyal to that promise.

Dismissed

"However, any officer that falls short of our high standards and is proven to have acted in a grossly negligent way can expect to be dismissed from the force."

"We are committed to providing transparency to the public and publish the outcomes of professional standards investigations on our website. We welcome the publication of the Disapproved Register. It shows there is nowhere to hide for police officers who have behaved in a way that amounts to gross misconduct."

The most common gross misconduct offences nationwide were giving of false evidence, data misuse, failing to perform duty, fraud or striking up relationships with vulnerable people encountered on duty.

Salt Cave updates ancient therapy



Salt Cave West Midlands manager Zoe Ness (left) with Halls Commercial agent Nicky Cotterill at the new facility

A SALT Cave has opened in Dudley to provide a natural therapy for asthma and skin conditions.

David Hetherington and Zoe Ness have set up Salt Cave West Midlands, the eight of its kind in the UK, by taking a lease on a shop at The Waterfront, Brierley Hill

Salt therapy (or halotherapy), is a powerful natural treatment that dates back to ancient times, including the Greeks and Romans.

Controlled

The hi-tech 21st century version involves a controlled air environment that simulates the natural salt cave microclimate to treat respiratory and skin conditions.

It uses the innate anti-bacterial and anti-inflamma-

tory properties of salt to remove airborne pollen from the body and build the immune system.

Salt Cave West Midlands is using the latest technology and have signed a new lease, negotiated by joint agents Halls Commercial, to use the former Imperial Chinese restaurant, following a change of use granted by Dudley Council.

Salt Cave manager Zoe Ness said: "This is a brilliant opportunity for us to build our business employing a natural therapy developed by the ancient Greeks, but using the most advanced device called Breeze Tronic Pro in our own purpose-built micro climate."

This will be the first such Salt Cave outside Scotland and the Home Counties.

Memorial to terror victims planned for Staffordshire

A MEMORIAL for Britons killed in terror attacks overseas will be opened at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire next year.

David Cameron revealed that the tribute would be in place by the summer of 2017. The Prime Minister also announced the launch of a consultation on a separate memorial to the victims of the Sousse and Bardo attacks in Tunisia.

A Black Country mother whose son, brother and father were killed in Tunisia has welcomed the news.

"I think it is a fantastic place for remembrance and it is so fitting," said Suzy Richards, whose 19-year-old son Joel, brother Adrian Evans, aged 49, and father Patrick Evans, 78, died in the Sousse beach shootings on June 26 last year.

Joel's younger brother Owen, now 17, who was also on the holiday with his fellow Walsall FC fans, survived the attack.

Mrs Richards, from Wednesbury, added: "We are really pleased that the national memorial will be located in Staffordshire because it makes it an easier destination for people across the country to travel to."

The Sousse attack was the worst incident of terrorism involving British citizens since the 7/7 bombings in London.

Mr Cameron said: "These memorials will be places where the family and friends of people killed in terrorist attacks can reflect and remember. "By building them we are underlining our pledge to never forget the victims of these atrocities."

Hoax calls putting strain on service

ALMOST 1,000 hoax calls have been made to fire crews in the Black Country during the past three years, new figures reveal.

West Midlands Fire Service says each time firefighters attend a malicious false alarm it ties up valuable resources putting lives at risk and costs £425. Although the number of nuisance calls has fallen in recent years, chiefs say they are 'frustrated' that hundreds are still logged. Call handlers have been trained to recognise suspicious calls in a bid to reduce the number of times engines are sent out when not actually needed.

During the last 12 months 283 nuisance calls were logged across Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall, compared with 321 in 2014/15.

Beer festival set to boost hospice funds

THE Mary Stevens Hospice, in Stourbridge, is to benefit from this summer's Black Country Beer Festival. The event between August 11 and 13 at Lye Cricket Club's ground, off Stourbridge Road, will feature 105 ales, ciders and perries and hog roast.

Teddy Bear Course

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Sale of UK businesses put on hold by Tata Steel

BLACK Country steelmakers face weeks of further uncertainty after India-based Tata puts sale of its UK steel business on hold.

Tata's board, meeting in Mumbai on Friday, had been expected to announced a shortlist of two from the seven bidders looking to buy the business, which employs 11,000 in the UK. Instead they said Tata Steel has entered into discussions with strategic players in the steel industry to explore the feasibility of collaborations through a potential joint venture. The talks are at an early stage.

The Community union said the move continued uncertainty for thousands of steelworkers and their families, including around 750 working at sites in Brierley Hill, Wednesfield, Walsall and Wednesbury.

Tata said there had been seven expressions of interest after it announced in March it was selling its loss making UK assets.

The bids have been considered and reviewed in the light of 'uncertainties' caused by Brexit, said the company. It has now decided to look at 'alternative and more sustainable' solutions.

Discussions have started with companies including German firm Thyssenkrupp.

Koushik Chatterjee, Tata's group executive director said: "A potential strategic combination of strip products businesses offers the best prospects to create a premium, world-class strip steel business with the scale and scope to compete successfully on the global stage."

Twilight trail is offered at zoo

DUDLEY Zoo is offering a twilight tour when visitors will be able to see what happens as keepers settle the animals down for the night.

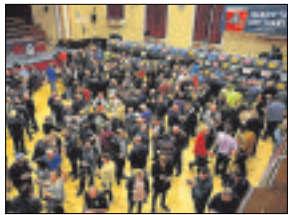
The Twilight Trail sold out when announced but a second date, on July 22, has been added for the behind-the-scenes guided tour when guests shadow keepers during their lock-up duties and preparing supper for the animals.

Marketing manager Andrea Hales said: "Our Wake up the Zoo experience is always popular but we always get questions asking how animals sleep and what our keepers do at night, so this is the ideal opportunity to find out." The tour lasts around two hours, from 5.45 pm, and ends with a barbecue. Call (01384) 215315.

Sports day being held at care home

A CARE home is inviting the public to attend, or even get involved, with its sports day. Holbeche House Care Home in Kingswinford will be holding its Sports Day at the home on July 29 from 2pm. Contact (01384) 288924.

Last orders called on winter ales fair



Crowds flocked to 2015's winter ale event

THE annual Dudley Winter Ales Fayre has been cancelled this year because of a shortage of volunteer.

Dudley and South Staffordshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has run the event in the borough for three decades. More than 2,000 people attended last November's 30th festival in Dudley Town Hall.

Branch chairman Ryan Hunt said: "It is with a feeling of deep regret that I have little choice but to announce the cancellation of Dudley Winter Ales Fayre."

"Unfortunately, with limited input from the local real ale community, we have to be realistic about what we can achieve as a branch."

The group held an emergency meeting on June 20 at the Park Inn, Woodsetton, to try to drum up help from its 1,200 members.

The branch had got Woodsetton's Holden's Brewery on board to sponsor the 31st fair, which would have featured 70 real ales.

Former branch chairman Steve Thompson said: "Currently we are not sure what the future may hold. It

is a great pity, as Ryan indicates, that with the significant number of members not enough people are prepared to support the planning and organisation of the event."

Mr Hunt added: "I have no doubt that CAMRA members from all corners of the country will find this sad news hard to stomach. For 30 years, Dudley Winter Ales Fayre has been the go-to year-end festival for over 2,000 people. With the best will in the world, we cannot deliver your festival this year and for that I am sincerely sorry."

Library opening hours slashed to save money

OPENING hours are being slashed at libraries across Dudley borough in a cost-cutting move.

Libraries will all see hours shaved off their days from August.

Sedgley's branch will be hit particularly hard, losing 17 hours between Monday and Saturday and closing on Sundays. Libraries in Brierley Hill and Halesowen will also now close on Sundays with opening hours cut during the week. Both Dudley and Stourbridge Libraries will lose 11 hours a week.

Many of the smaller libraries across the borough will now close at 4pm or 5pm on weekdays. Netherton Library will no longer be open on Saturdays, while Kingswinford's branch will lose 10 hours.

The moves have been announced by Dudley Council and are due to come into force from August 1. The cash-strapped authority has been desperate to cut costs around its libraries amid falling usage.

Many of the larger libraries currently stay open until 7pm during the week but bosses said that was no longer possible in the current climate.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "The decision to reduce our opening times reflects a need to reduce budgets across the council in a time of huge cuts to local government funding."

Feedback

"The good news is that no libraries are closing. Instead we have reduced the opening hours but only after listening to feedback from customers and looking closely at usage data."

It comes after council bosses decided the borough's libraries would be run by volunteers at board level under a move to a not-for-profit mutual.

Sedgley Library is currently open until 7pm Monday to Friday but will shut at 4pm on each weekday apart from Wednesday when it will be open to 6pm. It will be closed on Sundays, having previously been open between 10am and 2pm.

The main Dudley Library on St James's Road will close an hour earlier at 6pm between Monday and Wednesday and at 5pm on Thursday and Friday. Similar changes will be made at Stourbridge, Brierley Hill and Halesowen libraries.

Patrick Harley, leader of the opposition Conservative group, said he believed the cuts to hours were too severe.

Jake goes ape as gorilla arrives



Jake Pearson, from Pensnett Road in Dudley, has bought an eight foot gorilla for his front garden

WHEN decorating a garden, some may opt for pots and planters, maybe a gnome but Jake Pearson prefers a more eye-catching ornament.

That is certainly the case when his latest decoration arrived – an 8ft tall gorilla.

It certainly got a few curtains twitching in the Dudley street where he lives.

The model has taken pride of place on his driveway alongside

some other unusual decorations – enough dinosaurs to make his part of Pensnett Road look like Jurassic Park.

It all started when Jake spotted a model dinosaur at an auction. His latest King Kong-like addition was bought online.

The menagerie is turning a few heads and is a big hit with the local children. Jake has four grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren himself.

He said: "The kids love it and that's why I do it. I might buy a brontosaurus next."

There is also a serious side to the collecting, with Jake encouraging anyone who poses for a photo with the gorilla to donate some money to Cancer Research after his wife Eileen died of the illness in February after a five year battle. Jake said: "I ask them to just put a few pennies in the box if they have a photo."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Centre wants bus shelters updated

BUS shelters at Merry Hill bus station are to be updated as part of a wider revamp.

Plans for larger shelters have been lodged with planners by Intu, which owns the shopping centre.

Bosses have been keen to improve the bus station and said they would be aiming to progress with the plans over the coming months.

Steve Beverley, sustainable travel manager at Merry Hill, said: "We are working closely with Transport for West Midlands to look at ways to improve the bus station at the centre."

Caving club has 50th anniversary

DUDLEY Caving Club is celebrating its 50th anniversary with an open day at its base in Gornal.

The club, which is part of the Midlands Cave Rescue Organisation, is holding the event at the Ruiton Windmill, off Vale Street, on Saturday, from 10am to 4pm.

There will be a barbecue and refreshments. Visitors will also be able to see the views from the top of the mill, plus abseiling and caving demonstrations. People will also be challenged to test their claustrophobia rating in the club's 'squeeze box'.

Half way for canal dredging

A £1 million project to dredge sections of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal is half way to completion.

Work on the project that will dredge sections of the 46-mile canal from Tixall Lock in Staffordshire to Falling Sand Lock near Kidderminster started in March 2016.

So far 2,472 tonnes of silt have been pulled from the canal. But by the end of this summer, a total of 17,500 tonnes of silt will have been removed.

Harmony reigns at concert with pastors

A CHOIR will be performing a concert in Stourbridge.

Voices in Harmony will be singing at New Road Methodist Church on Saturday, July 23.

They will be joining forces with Stourbridge Street pastors who run patrols in the town centre every weekend.

Tickets are available for £5 at the door or from Alison Underwood on 07910641833. Email Stourbridge@streetpastors.co.uk

Banjo man at folk club

SINGER-SONGWRITER and banjo player Dan Walsh will be guest performer at Stourbridge Folk Club on July 28. Tickets for the concert at Katie Fitzgerald's in Enville Street, from 8pm, cost £8 or £10 on the door. The musician has released three solo albums.

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It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

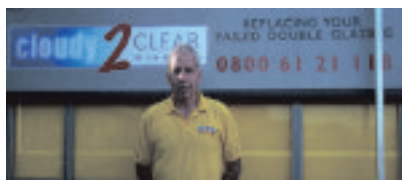
Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people



I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Coming to terms with ordeal 20 years on

TABLOID headline: "Thrifty Kate strikes again: Duchess of Cambridge recycles £900 yellow Roksanda dress to watch Wimbledon."

Hmm. She spent the thick end of a grand on a dress, and wore it twice. Depends on your definition of thrift, I guess.

AT my local branch of Boots at the weekend, a very charming shop assistant asked: "Is it a present?"

A little worrying, considering I had just purchased a bottle of Black Opium Nuit Blanche perfume. Apparently, its name refers to "A night in Paris once a year when rock chicks take control and make the city their playground until dawn."

Very alluring, I'm sure. But, on balance, I'm still more of a Brut 33 man.

IT is hard to believe it is 20 years since the Wolverhampton teddy bears' picnic horror, where paranoid schizophrenic Horrett Campbell attacked children at a nursery school with a machete.

The youngsters protected by the selfless actions of nursery teacher Lisa Potts are now grown up, and it is heartwarming to see the positive, mature way that victims Ahmed Malik and Francesca Quintyne have come to terms with the ordeal. Ahmed, now 23, says he does not have any feelings of ill-will towards Campbell, and was saddened by a headline from the time which described him as the "Face of Evil".

He said: "That made me angry. It did not take the issue of mental illness seriously. He was not evil, he was ill and was not fully aware of what he was doing."

Fran, now 24, has a degree in psychology and is working at a hospital. "I want to help prevent people with mental problems doing the sort of thing that Horrett Campbell did," she says.

It is hard to blame anybody for thinking that Campbell is evil. But mental health is the great elephant in the room which people have avoided discussing in polite society for decades. And while the likes of Campbell will always hit the headlines, there are many other people quietly suffering with conditions which could be prevented if only mental health was taken as seriously as physical health issues.

Good luck to both Fran and Ahmed. Let's hope their wise words are taken seriously and that something positive can come out of their ordeal.

JEREMY Corbyn kept a low profile throughout the Euro referendum, nominally supporting a cause many thought his heart was not in. His leadership is now hanging by a thread following a vote-of-no-confidence by his own MPs. Meanwhile, Theresa May also kept a low profile, nominally supporting a position many thought her heart was not in. And she is about to become Prime Minister. There's a lesson to be learned somewhere.



28a Hall Green Road, Sandwell



The former Lloyds Bank, Birmingham Street, Oldbury



The former police station, in Dudley Road, Birmingham

Don't let old buildings crumble into nothing

JESSICA LABHART talks to a woman who is passionate about saving important buildings left to rack and ruin

DOZENS of historically significant buildings are at risk of falling into disrepair in the West Midlands according to a new book which is appealing for potential owners to come forward to save them.

The buildings at risk include an ornate Victorian educational institute, an X-ray building, a very early branch of Lloyds Bank, a huge pub, a miniature police station and a pumping station.

The nine buildings feature in 'SAVE's 2016-17 Buildings at Risk Catalogue' which will be published on June 27.

The aim of the book is to encourage potential buyers to find out more about the buildings and perhaps put in an offer to save them from falling into further disrepair.

Liz Fuller, SAVE's Buildings at risk officer, who has compiled the book said: "The catalogue is a sampling of the kind of buildings that make our towns and villages distinctive and will be of interest to anyone who loves old buildings and their history."

Engineer

The guide, considered the ultimate 'lonely hearts' list for buildings across the country in need of new owners includes Bilston Science and Art Building, located on Mount Pleasant, Wolverhampton.

The school of art has long served Wolverhampton as a place of education and improvement. Situated in the Mount Pleasant area, it was built to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897. The building was designed by Captain Wilson, the Town Engineer. A number of nearby buildings from this era have been converted to new uses. The old tram shed is a Sikh temple and the ornate former drill hall is a popular live music venue.



Bilston Science and Art Building, located on Mount Pleasant, Wolverhampton

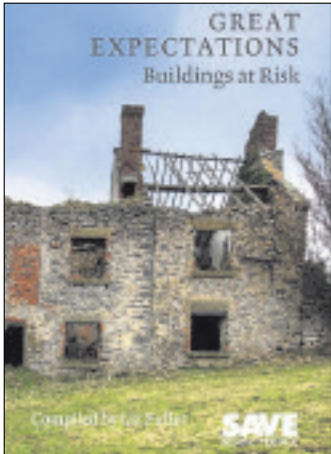
Other buildings included in the book are the X-Ray Building, Foundry Lane, Smethwick. Built around 1900 this building housed Commercial X-rays Limited until about 1990. The façade is described as having 'an unexpected elegance'.

Built of brick in a variety of colours, there are shallow segmental-headed window surrounds with key stones picked out in contrasting brick. The building is now in a very poor state of repair and stands in an area of other ex-industrial buildings, some listed Grade II and II. The Commercial X-ray building has in the past been used as an arts venue and the book's author hopes it could be brought back into use in this role or could provide interesting office space or light industrial space.

Meanwhile, 28a Hall Green Road, Sandwell was built in around 1800 has three storeys, the third being a rather low attic storey, with

a symmetrical front of two bays. The central door has a pediment. While the house probably stood in its own grounds just off a main road, it is now located in close proximity to a light industrial business and is surrounded by other modern industrial buildings. It is in quite a poor condition with its roof sheathed in protective tarpaulin. Given its location, it may not be suited to restoration to its original residential use.

The former Lloyds Bank, Birmingham Street, Oldbury, was the first branch office Lloyds Bank ever opened, in 1884. The house has three storeys of four somewhat unequal bays, with a door placed off-centre perhaps indicating that this used to be two house rather than one. The building served as a bank until relatively recently. Speaking of the building, Miss Fuller said: "This interesting and historic building is now standing empty and neglected.



The front cover of the catalogue

It could be suited to conversion to offices or retail at ground level with residential units above."

Dudley Road Police Station, Dudley Road, Birmingham, is another building featured in the publication. The house sits in the corner of Summerfield Park and used to be the local police station. It was built in the late 19th or early 20th century. The half timbered gable and canted window at first floor level forms an elaborate and eye-catching focus. It has been empty for some time and stands boarded up and graffiti-marked. Located as it is in the park, it could have a number of uses such as a community or children's centre or a café.

Mike Fox, SAVE Deputy Director, said: "Highlighting historic buildings from all over the country, and of all shapes and sizes, we hope that our readers will heroically take up the challenge and help revive these buildings."

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Employment laws need to be enforced

THE upsetting case of the delivery driver who was recently jailed for causing an accident through tiredness raises the issue of who is responsible.

The driver was not coming home from a nightclub but was completing a 16 hour day delivering white goods, a job he had to do in order to make a living. Had he been working on machinery in a factory and had collapsed due to exhaustion causing an accident would he still have been blamed?

We are supposed to have a law that workers do no more than 48 hours a week, this is

blatantly ignored. In the case of people who drive as part of their job, whether they be in a car, van or lorry, they should be limited to the amount of driving they should be allowed to do as coach drivers are.

There seems to be a macho culture that parking up and getting a proper rest is not the thing to do after a full day's work, however, that is exactly what should be the norm. Maybe there could be a study to see if employment laws need to be enforced.

R GWILLIAMS
Brierley Hill

Full support for Sir Cliff

I AM writing in response to the letter from D Pope who supported Sir Cliff Richard.

I agree whole heartedly with everything he says.

I have been a Cliff Richard fan for as long as I can remember, and together with my husband and friends have seen him on numerous occasions.

In fact last year when we went to the Royal Albert Hall to see his 75th birthday show, he was given a tremendous standing ovation before he had sung one word.

All of Cliff's loyal fans have stood by him through-out his horrendous ordeal, so have many of his show-business friends.

I sincerely hope that Cliff can now move forward with his life, knowing that his fans will love him and support him always.

J SAMPSON
Kingswinford

Leave vote must not be overridden

M. Cliff's suggestion that MPs should override the result of the EU Referendum is profoundly anti-democratic.

For some time, Governments have been elected by less than 40 per cent of the voters. General elections are decided by the outcome in about 100 target seats. Electors in safe seats opposed to the sitting MP are reduced to protest votes and tactical voting.

The EU Referendum was one where every elector felt that their vote counted. Consequently, there was a much higher turnout.

There is a need for a Proportional Representation voting system. This would give smaller parties a number of MPs that reflected their number of votes.

Then no one could be dismissed as having cast a 'wasted vote'.

I voted to stay in the EU and was disappointed by the result. But to allow MPs to override it would be a big step on the road to dictatorship.

R TABERNER
Tividale

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudleychrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Gridlock predicted near new Aldi store

RE the new Aldi on the A4123 Birmingham New Road

I would be interested to know what arrangements have been made/agreed by DMBC for vehicles entering/exiting the car park at the above.

At 4:30 today I was in a queue of traffic approaching the traffic lights at the junction where Aldi is being built.

I was in this queue for over five minutes before negotiating the junction, the main reason of course is due to the stupid traffic lights sequence further down the hill towards Wolverhampton.

It only takes one vehicle

to attempt to turn right into Sedgley Rd West to create total gridlock back as far as the A4037 past the Dudley Canal Trust.

Surely the sequence could be changed allowing an unimpeded right turn into Sedgley Rd West or, better still, create a right turn slip road - as per the access from the A4123 onto the A4037 by the Sea Cadets HQ further back on the A4123.

My concern is that once Aldi is opened, there will be additional traffic leaving their car park thus creating an even greater gridlock.

J RICHMOND
Sedgley

Barr Beacon in Geopark?

I AM writing in response to an article regarding the formation of the Geopark in the Black Country (Geology sites get global attention, Dudley Chronicle, June 30).

I can't understand why Barr Beacon is in the equation when - by no stretch of the imagination - is Barr Beacon in the Black Country.

I am sure a lot of true Black Country readers would agree with my query. I would appreciate it if someone could explain.

E PROVAN
Cradley

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Celebration spotlights Black Country beer, engineering and glass expertise

Showcasing the best of region at Westminster

BANKS'S Bitter, military aircraft parts and the finest glass wares have been among the items on display after a host of the Black Country's top firms descended on the House of Commons.

Eighteen of the region's most celebrated businesses were invited to a one-off event at Westminster to showcase all that is great about innovation and entrepreneurialism in the Black Country. Dudley North MP Ian Austin has worked with the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to give local business figures, Government ministers and MPs from all parties the chance to meet businesses and see how the region produces everything from nuclear reactors and Bugatti sports cars to Olympic torches and the country's most bostin' beer.

Mr Austin said: "I grew up in Dud-

ley, I love the Black Country and I'm proud of it. Manufacturing is a really important part of the Black Country's heritage but I want to show that hi-tech manufacturing, science and technology has a bright future in the region too.

"That's why I'm delighted to be able to organise this event in Parliament, where our brilliant local producers and manufacturers can show off their work to MPs from across the country."

Aerospace

Dubbed the Black Country Day Celebration, Tuesday's event saw a range of products on display in the oak-panelled Jubilee Room.

Among the companies exhibiting will be Wolverhampton-based aerospace experts HS Marston, Wednesbury aluminium firm Alucast, Stourbridge Glass, CUBE Precision Engineering from Rowley Regis and brewers Marston's and Holden's. Tony Sartorius, director at Alucast, said he hopes to display an Olymp-

pic torch and the front caliper for a Bugatti supercar – both produced at the firm's Western Way site. We want to make politicians interested in the work we do," he said.

Ninder Johal, board member of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, said the event would help to highlight the 'great feats of manufacturing' that the area is synonymous with. The Black Country is a proud centre of manufacturing, but it is important that we look to the future," he said.

"We have a wonderful mix of innovative and traditional industries here. We need to make sure we put the products of these industries on show. The event in Parliament is a great opportunity to let the people making the big decisions see exactly what we have to offer as a region."

The event has been backed by MPs from both sides of the political divide.

Wolverhampton South East's Labour MP Pat McFadden, said the Black Country did not always get the credit it deserves for the innovation

of its businesses. "The Black Country can sometimes be overlooked on a national and international level," he said. "This event is a fantastic opportunity for Black Country firms to bring their great products to Parliament. I hope it is a great success for our area."

Stourbridge's Tory MP Margot James has pledged her support for the event. She tweeted: "Delighted that @ianaustinMP is showcasing the best of our wonderful Black Country on the 12th July in Parliament."

Other firms exhibiting at the event included West Bromwich-based alloy wheels manufacturers Rimstock, Dudley furniture specialists Boss Design, the Westley Group, and automotive interiors firm Cabauto.

Meanwhile the Black Country LEP will deliver presentations on the manufacturing city initiative and virtual car solution the Black Country Bullet.

The event comes in the midst of the Black Country Festival, a month of events aimed at celebrating the region's rich heritage.



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New start for Christian after his year of pain

CHRISTIAN Caddick anticipated the happiest year of his life when his girlfriend said 'yes' while holidaying in idyllic and sunny Somerset a year ago.

Little did he know awaiting him would be two life-threatening illnesses and a broken ankle before he even reached the first anniversary of his engagement.

The 25-year-old has put that behind him and is aiming to join 20,000 runners for Great Birmingham Run half marathon on October 16 to thank the charity that helped save his life.

Mr Caddick, born in Wordsley, was treated at the Teenage Cancer Trust's Young Person's Unit, YPU, at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham.

He hopes to help raise £25,000 for the charity.

"Looking back now, it's hard to believe what's happened," he said.

Lucky

"To go from getting engaged to being diagnosed with cancer in exactly three weeks, then to break my ankle and get a blood clot on my lung. It's been a stressful, surreal year.

"But I try to see positives in everything. I'm really lucky to be here and want to embrace everything.

"Teenage Cancer Trust is aiming to raise £25,000 at the half marathon and I want to help them achieve this.

"Their staff helped save my life and were so supportive during my treatment. I now want to help them save more lives."

Mr Caddick's traumatic 12 months began after the joy of fiancée Sarah Buckler, 24, agreeing to marry him. He was diagnosed with testicular cancer after finding a lump in his chest.

After undergoing an orchidectomy to remove a testicle, it was discovered



Christian Caddick will be taking on the Birmingham half marathon this year the disease had spread to his lymph nodes. Nine friends rallied in shaving his head the day before his gruelling nine-week course of chemotherapy began, raising £12,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

He entered remission on October 16 – the date he will be running the Great Birmingham Run this year.

The technical manager for Third Financial Software, Halesowen, signed up for the half marathon in January and began training but just a month later skidded down a bank while fetching a football during a five-a-side and broke his left ankle. He was in plaster for seven weeks but developed a far more serious condition. Bed bound



Christian Caddick and fiancée Sarah Buckler during his cancer battle

with a fever, he became short of breath on Easter Sunday and was diagnosed with a pulmonary embolism. His blood-thinning medication finished the day before his 25th birthday. "I'm hoping my birthday marks the start of a better year," he added.

"When the doctor told me I'd got cancer, my mum and fiancée were probably more shocked than me. It was tough to hear, but I just said 'let's beat this'." The chemo, feeling sick everyday, was nine long weeks but being around people of my age on the YPU was a big help. I also had amazing support from my family and friends. To sponsor him visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/ChristianCaddick988

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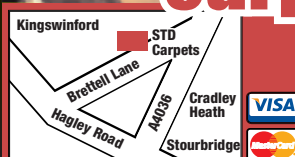
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£1m for restoration of historic buildings

Hate suspect on camera



Police want to speak to this woman following an incident on a train

A WOMAN was verbally abused about her sexuality while using a train travelling from Stourbridge Town and Stourbridge Junction stations.

The British Transport Police is appealing for information and has released a CCTV image of a woman they want to question in relation to the hate crime incident last month.

The incident happened around 5pm on Tuesday, June 7.

A police spokesman said: "A female victim reported that she had received verbal abuse about her sexuality from another woman on a train between Stourbridge Town and Stourbridge Junction stations."

Anyone with information about the abuse or recognises the woman pictured is asked to call the transport police on 0800 405040 or text 61016, referring to incident 415 of June 7.

MORE than £1 million will be spent on restoring historic buildings in Dudley town centre following a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Cash-strapped Dudley Council has been awarded £1,178,000 funding, which is the second cash boost from the HLF, to continue its regeneration of the town centre.

The money will fund work to restore 14 buildings which could see them then used by local businesses.

Council bosses say the funding will help 'breathe new life' into Dudley town centre, but are yet to announce which sites will be restored.

"We have big plans for this second phase of investment, which will run over the next four years and will see the restoration of 14 key town centre properties," said Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development.

Significant

"We are really grateful for this second significant boost of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund."

"We have identified the 14 buildings but haven't really clarified the plans yet and it is too early to say what the buildings are."

"We've already seen how this money can transform buildings and breathe new life into our town centre, with many new businesses hastening to take over these rejuvenated buildings."

The latest round of funding will link Dudley's retail area to the Civic Quarter.

The work aims to make the town centre a more attractive destination to shop, work and visit, which will help boost trade for local businesses.

Dudley Council also plans to launch a town centre geo trail, a smartphone app, heritage open days and town ambassador training sessions as part of the rejuvenation.

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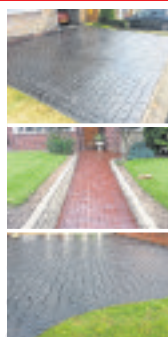
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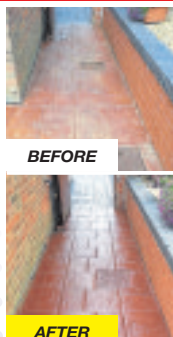
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£650k sale at auction for a 'doorstop' vase



Auctioneer Charles Hanson with the 'remarkable' rare Chinese vase that dates back more than 200 years

A VASE used as a doorstop in a Black Country home has fetched £650,000 at auction. The antique – described as 'the find of a lifetime' – sold last week.

Discovered propping a door open in a home, it was later found to be a rare Chinese artefact from the 18th century, probably made for the Emperor of China.

A round of applause filled the auction room in Derby as it sold for £650,000.

The 26-inch tall blue and white vase, made in China during the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1735-99), was spotted by Hanson's Auctioneers associate director Adrian Rathbone. The vase was passed on to the unidentified Black Country couple by a great aunt Florrie and had latterly been used as a doorstop. Luckily, it sustained no damage.

Experts believe the vase was possibly manufactured at China's imperial kilns for the Emperor's Summer Palace. Charles Hanson, of Hanson's Auctioneers, said the find was 'remarkable'.

Paintings of old Black Country on show at Portal

DRAMATIC and atmospheric paintings depicting the Black Country's industrial past will form a new exhibition in the Dudley Canal Trust's Portal building.

The exhibition of artist Ken Wood's work features paintings inspired by local views of canal-side factories and streets, as well as domestic scenes.

By using a vibrant palette, Mr Wood captures the roar of the furnaces and the thick smoggy air, as well as the lives of the workers.

"We're delighted to be able to display Ken's work in our new temporary exhibition space", said Holly Wain, heritage activities assistant at Dudley Canal

Trust. "His work is so striking and perfectly captures the atmosphere of the Black Country in years gone by."

His works have been exhibited widely and have found their way to the USA and New Zealand.

Ken said: "I have exhibited my work at several venues throughout the Black Country and beyond. So when I had the opportunity to show some of my paintings at the fabulously impressive building, the Dudley Canal Trust's Portal, I jumped at the opportunity".

The exhibition is free to visit and will run until August 22. All of the artwork will be for sale.

The write stuff

A WRITERS' workshop is being held in Halesowen Library in September.

Author Mike Uden will lead the event on September 10 from 11am to 1pm.

Places can be booked by calling the library on (01384) 812982.

Mr Uden's books, which include Dead Man Talking and The Sacrifice, will be on sale.

Lorry driver caught up in Thai fake brands racket

THE name and address of a lorry driver from Brierley Hill was used by the organiser of a sophisticated operation bringing fake designer clothing into the UK,

But Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that Ralph McConnell was not the man behind the racket because he had been duped into giving his personal details while he was obtaining a visa to bring his Thai wife to this country.

Report by John Scott

"I thought he was a friend and that I was doing him a favour when he used my address. It was all going on behind my back," he told the court.

Computers belonging to the 43-year-old and members of his family were seized when trading standards officials launched an investigation into the import of bogus Ralph Lauren, Lacoste and Fred Perry Polo shirts and T-shirts from Thailand.

Mr Mark Jackson, prosecuting on behalf of Dudley Council, accepted others were involved but insisted that the defendant – who previously lived in Thailand – was a leading player in the fraud.

McConnell, whose wife works as a cleaner, conceded he realised the clothing was fake after it had been returned by disappointed customers who bought it through an internet website. However, he maintained: "I did not set it up and had no access to the bank account for the money."

He and his wife sent small amounts of cash back to family members in Thailand but the size of those payments proved he was not a major beneficiary from the fraud, argued Mr Jonathan Rose, defending.

McConnell, of Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute counterfeit goods on the basis that he was not a prime mover in the operation. He was given a nine-month prison sentence suspended for a year plus 100 hours of unpaid work.

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Wolves fans ran across the Cotswolds



Craig Purser, left, and Phil Marsh completed the equivalent of four marathons in four days in their Cotswolds run

TWO friends who were bought together by their shared love of Wolves completed an epic challenge by running four marathons in four days.

Phil Marsh and Craig Purser began running together after striking up a friendship at Molineux.

Their latest challenge saw them take on a 107-mile run around the Cotswolds - meaning they had to cover more than 25 miles a day on average.

Phil, 59, only began running at Craig's behest eight years ago. Car mechanic Phil, from Lower Gornal, said: "I was one of those who would watch people run by in the rain think-

ing 'they must be mad'. Craig talked me into carrying the bags at a Spanish marathon in Palma. I ended up signing up for it and enjoyed it."

The pair have since taken on dozens of challenges together but Phil admitted the Cotswolds challenge was tougher than anything he and heating engineer Craig, 38, from Brierley Hill, had faced before.

He said: "I would normally look at doing a four-hour marathon but this was an unknown. 'I have heard people have taken the wrong turn and added another five miles on."

"It's a mixed terrain. There is 30

to 40 miles of off-road and we run through little villages. There are some hills as well."

They started in Chipping Camden and spent the next four days making their way to Bath.

The pair ran for the charities Mind and the Acorn Children's Hospital and raised more than £1,000.

The pair initially met in 2008 as season ticket holders to Wolves.

This is just the latest in a series of challenges they've done together, also including the annual cross country running event 'Race the Train' in Wales.

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Murals now take pride of place at new farm home

STUNNING artwork has been unveiled detailing the history of West Bromwich after it was left hidden away for decades.

Murals, created by William Burgess, from Sedgley, were originally installed in the old headquarters of the West Bromwich Building Society in 1978 and remained there up until earlier this year.

But as the company has moved HQ the artwork needed a new home, and organisers stepped in to save the artwork and move it to a new home at Sandwell Park Farm.

Now the installation of the artwork is complete after a lengthy and delicate process of transporting the pieces to Sandwell Park Farm.

The colourful artwork was unveiled at launch event by organisers where dignitaries of West Bromwich attended.

Carol Hartill, secretary of Friends of Dartmouth Park, said: "It was a lovely event at the farm and now the artwork is in place it looks really good.

"The murals are displayed in the first room as you walk through the farm so everyone can get to see them. The artwork looks pretty spectacular. The artist of the murals, William Burgess, came along to to cut the ribbon at the launch."

"The contractor did an expert job of putting up the artwork," she said.

The murals are made from clay and depict famous people and buildings, such as West Bromwich Town Hall, while another shows Oak House, and there is a mural of the Farley Clock Tower.

Albion goal hero Tony 'Bomber' Brown, also features on the artwork.



Dudley artist William Burgess with murals which have now been installed at Sandwell Park Farm

Business looking to shed 85 jobs

A BUSINESS with a factory in Dudley, that specialises in shop fitting, is facing making up to 85 redundancies after it was hit by the collapse of BHS.

But the The Alan Nuttall Partnership is looking to move its operation specialising in shop refurbishment from its St Neots factory to its main manufacturing site in Hall Street, Dudley.

But job losses would affect all of the firm's sites, which also includes its head office at Hinckley and a factory in Rugby.

Operations director Matt Hornblower said the company employed about 600 in total. He said: "In the current climate retailers are holding back from investing."

The company is planning to close its St Neots factory. Mr Hornblower said that formal consultation over the redundancies was due to start this week but staff had been informed of the numbers that were being sought.

Alan Nuttall, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary, is aiming to reduce overheads. Mr Hornblower said it had suffered a £95,500 loss with the collapse of BHS but still had work for Morrisons and Asda.

Market has shut after more than 40 years

CRADLEY Heath market has closed down after more than 40 years.

It comes after the indoor market was left with just one stallholder after traders moved into nearby shops. Oyster Properties say they are in talks with Asda and Lidl over the future of the site.

Concerns were raised about falling footfall at the 40-stall capacity market hall, despite a five-figure investment by the property group.

A spokesman for Oyster said: "The last year and a half we have been trying to revive the market and get it back to where it should be but we either did not have the right people coming in or they were just not coming at all. Unfortunately it has not survived but we are keen to look to the future and get someone in the space."

Around six stalls have now moved into shop units attached to the market hall, also owned by Oyster, including former pet food, flowers and giftware stalls.

The spokesman continued: "Since it has been empty we have spoken to a few large retail companies who could bring more footfall into Cradley by taking over the old space. These include names such as Home Bargains, Asda and Lidl."

"What is extremely positive is the fact that it has created an entrepreneur-

By Clare Butler

ship in the town as the adjoining shop units that some holders have moved into are doing very well. We want to see the whole of Cradley regenerated in a similar way."

Gary Link, who had previously worked on the fish counter in the market, said: "It was expected that it was going to happen. Nevertheless, I was still shocked as it used to be thriving and it was really sad to see it deteriorate."

However, nearby The Central Market on High Street, known locally as the 'little market', is still open. Its manager Oliver Watchorn said: "We don't want our customers to think we are closed. We are very much open for business, offering a variety of stores from fresh produce to our own cafe. Our market is proud to serve the Cradley Heath community."

Trading standards watchdogs win award

CRIME-FIGHTING trading standards officers tackling fraudsters have been recognised with a national award.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's trading standards team has received a hero award from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute.

It follows a number of successful prosecutions including one against Summit Roofguard, in March.

The firm was prosecuted for tricking people into having new windows and roofs and for producing an unscrupulous 14-step guide for its sales staff.

It led to six prosecutions after a four-month trial for misleading and aggressive sales practices and was seen as a landmark case nationally.

Dudley's trading standards team were highlighted as one of the top teams in the country.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "Our trading standards team works hard to protect consumers and tackle crimes of this nature. Very often it is the elderly and the most vulnerable in this borough who are hit hard by these unscrupulous businesses."

"I am delighted that our hard work has been reflected nationally and we will continue to work with businesses to remind them of their legal duty and prosecute those who seek to cause misery by conning people."

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On the run to beat cancer – women gather for the fundraising event at Himley Hall

Himley park goes pink for run in aid of cancer research

A JOYFUL pink army of women did their bit to fight cancer at the Dudley area's Race for Life, held in the grounds of Himley Hall on Sunday.

Among the runners was Michelle Bennett, who was running with her three friends Karen Pye, Marsha Mash and Tracey Medlin. Michelle, aged 38, from West Bromwich, said: "It was absolutely brilliant. It was the first time I have done the event. I was running for my mother-in-law who has cancer but is recovering, and for Karen and Marsha, who beat cancer."

She said she expected they would raise around £500 for Cancer Research UK.

Hundreds of runners passed through the starting line before making their way around the lake in Himley park.

Sophie Roberts, 67, from Tettenthall Wood, who was taking part with family and friends, said: "I ran for a friend that died of cancer a few years ago. It is a lovely event and it is nice to raise money for a good cause."

Carol Eaton, 48, who was running with colleagues from St Mark's CoE Primary School in Pensnett, said: "It was a really good event. We ran as a team called St Mark's Ladies. It was in memory of our colleague Raggie Mander, a nursery teacher."



Pretty in pink – Sarah Trevis from Dudley



One of Vicky's Vikings on the run



The Wall Heath Guides took part in the Run for Life



The race was quite a spectacle(s)



Karina Taylor and Carol Eaton from Pensnett

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History is sign of the times

ICONIC signs at the Black Country Living Museum will be restored over the next few months in a £700 project.

Seven signs will be refreshed and re-wrote in total from elaborate shop front designs to others warning not to feed the pigs.

Clare Weston, curator of domestic cultural life at the heritage site, said: "We're refreshing the signage around the site and ensuring that everything is up to date over the coming months. Signwriting itself is a very important part of 'set dressing' the museum and historically these types of signs would have been done freehand after being chalked out.

"It is an art form that we are proud to preserve at Black Country Living Museum."

The work is by sign-writer Dave Perks who has carried out restoration work at the Tipton Road attraction in the past.

Rail bosses plan for demand on trains to rise by nearly half

LONGER trains and platforms, more services and upgraded stations could be on the cards as rail travel demand is expected to increase by 49 per cent in the next seven years.

The steep rise is expected in the West Midlands and Chilterns region with an additional 24 million annual passenger journeys expected to be taking place in 2023.

The routes, which links Birmingham and the West Midlands with London via towns in Warwickshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, already caters for more than 50 million passen-

ger journeys per year – a number predicted to increase to more than 100 million journeys by 2043. Through its multi-billion pound Railway Upgrade Plan, Network Rail is aiming to provide passengers with a better railway and help boost economies.

Challenges

This has already included the £750m redevelopment of Birmingham New Street station and the £250m upgrade of the railway near Stafford.

A study was carried out by Network Rail to produce the figures, which outline the capacity challenges and has options to improve future

services for passengers and freight. While the HS2 will provide more frequent, faster services from the West Midlands to London, there will be a need to upgrade the existing railway so passengers can easily access HS2.

Martin Frobisher, route managing director for Network Rail, said: "Across the West Midlands and Chilterns, there is much to do to meet predicted demand. The impact of HS2 will be huge. Our multi-billion pound Railway Upgrade Plan is already delivering better services for passengers and boosting our economy, as highlighted by the redevelopment of Birmingham New Street.

Police criticised over travellers

A COUNCILLOR has slammed West Midlands Police for not being tough enough in dealing with travellers who illegally set up camp on Dudley parks.

The borough has been blighted by a number of traveller camps this summer.

Councillor Qadar Zada, for Netherton, Woodside and St Andrew's Ward, said: "It is unacceptable. Communities have been infiltrated. Councillors were left helpless and residents said police weren't taking calls. The people who came to the rescue were the council."

Police bosses say they are monitoring the situation and working with Dudley Council. Chief Inspector Simon Inglis said: "Any reports provided to us will be dealt with in a professional and proportionate manner."

Taking the lead for good cause



Kellie Ceccarelli, Veterinary Training Manager for IAMS with Eukanuba

A DOG charity with branches across the region has benefitted from £100,000 in donations from a leading pet care firm.

Spectrum Brands which owns the IAMS and Eukanuba brands in the UK and Europe, donated the cash to three animal rescue charities as part of the company's ongoing commitment to animal welfare.

In particular the Retired Greyhound Trust (RGT) will benefit and veterinary manager for the dog food manufacturer, Kellie Ceccarelli, visited the RGT kennels in Stourbridge to meet the volunteers and greyhounds themselves.

Kellie said: "It was really touching to be able to visit this dedicated team and see first-hand the hard work and commitment that the employees and volunteers put into running the homing kennels.

"With hundreds of dogs in need of good

homes and care, it's so important that charities like these are given the support they need to continue."

The RGT was founded in 1975, since then they are proud to have found 75,000 loving homes for greyhounds.

Each year, they home approximately 4,000 retired racing greyhounds with families.

Sarah Vella-Brown, a manager with the RGT, said: "We would like to thank everyone at Spectrum Brands for supporting our local kennels to enable the retired greyhounds to achieve their full potential to live a long, happy and healthy life with their new family.

"The generous food donation means that we can invest funds into other areas, enabling us to help even more greyhounds across the country."

Forced marriage line gets 770 calls

A FORCED marriage helpline received more than 770 calls over the last two years from people in the West Midlands.

UK charity Karma Nirvana received 771 phone calls to its helpline between April 2014 and March 2016 – an average of more than one call every day.

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not consent. It is recognised in the UK as a form of violence and serious abuse of human rights. There was a surge in calls made between July 2014 and June 2015 – 530 in 12 months. The summer is known to be a risk period as school summer holiday can be seen as an opportunity to take children abroad, where they may be forced into a marriage.

Detective Inspector Wendy Bird, of West Midlands Police, said: "Some of our south Asian communities that live here are maybe second or third generations who are not willing to accept what has gone on before them and be forced into marriage."

Peakay look at the menu

A CANALSIDE restaurant in Dudley is putting on a Peakay Blinders themed night later this year.

The Gongoozler at Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust's Portal building, off Birmingham New Road, will be serving traditional Black Country 'tittle' at the event on September 15. The hit TV series was filmed at the nearby Black Country Living Museum.

Other special events planned at the restaurant include a pie night on October 13.

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An Express & Star photograph showing Bilston steel workers on the march for their jobs



This photo from the exhibition is by Nick Hedges



A picket line with Councillor Dennis Turner in the front row. Thanks to David Bagnall

MEMORY LANE

By Professor Carl Chinn

BILSTON was to the making of steel as was Belfast to the building of ships and Bradford to the production of wool.

Once famed for its iron, its bond with steel arose because of the vision and skills of Sir Alfred Hickman.

Born in 1830, at 16 he was at work in his father's business, the Groveland Ironworks and Moat Colliery in Tipton. He and his brother later took over the company, but in 1867 Alfred struck out on his own and bought the Spring Vale blast furnaces in Bilston.

A moderniser who was keen to adopt new processes, Hickman quickly recognised the potential of the new basic Bessemer steelmaking process when it was licensed in 1879.

With other Black Country ironmasters he organised a trial to see whether local pig iron was suitable for conversion into steel. Impressed, Hickman bought three Bessemer converters and formed the Staffordshire Steel and Ingot Company, with a steelworks next to his blast furnaces at Bilston.

By 1900, what was now Alfred Hickman Ltd was producing 3,000 tons of iron and 1,500 tons of steel annually, and employing more than 2,000. Hickman's business expanded greatly but after his death it was taken over in 1920 by Stewarts and Lloyds, a huge steel maker. Still the works continued to dominate employment in Bilston and in 1954 a new blast

Town's steely determination

furnace was lit to replace three smaller ones. It was named Elisabeth after the daughter of the chairman of Stewarts & Lloyds Ltd, but was called Big Lizzie by the workers.

This furnace produced 275,000 tons of steel a year. Another new blast furnace was named Charles. Then in 1967 Bilston Steel was nationalised and it became part of the British Steel Corporation.

Response

Throughout the next decade the historic works were threatened with closure and in November 1977 it was announced that they would almost certainly shut down in 1980. That would mean a loss of 2,500 jobs and potentially another 10,000 in firms dealing with the plant. This terrible news came despite the works having made a profit of £15 million in the previous three years.

The announcement of closure was made to the Bilston Works Council by John Pennington, managing director of the Sheffield Division of BSC. In response a Joint Trade Unions Action Committee was set up. Its chairman was the then Councillor Dennis Turner, later a Labour MP for Wolverhampton and then Lord Bilston. He declared that 'Bilston people have

been known for their tolerance but when they see the injustice of these proposals their wrath will be felt throughout the length and breadth of the country'.

Councillor Turner was also vice-chairman of the economic development committee on West Midlands County Council and chairman of the equivalent committee on Wolverhampton Council. As such he secured funding from both bodies to pay for a report by experts from Aston University on the viability of the Bilston Works. This showed clearly that there were solid economic grounds for the future.

As chairman of Bilston Joint Trade Unions Action Committee, Lord Bilston was instrumental in keeping it open. He was amongst the 500 workers who marched from Springvale Social Club through 'A' Gate at Millfield Road so that they might start rebricking the furnace. Alerted to what was going on, factory inspectors entered the site but were surprised to find that thanks to Councillor Turner the workers were covered by insurance from the Co-op. Faced by such determination British Steel were made to keep Elisabeth open. Victory was short-lived and in October 1980 the blast furnaces Lizzie and Charles were demolished.

The memory of Elisabeth in particular looms

large in the consciousness of the people of Bilston, and an important new project highlights its ongoing significance to the town.

It is called 'In the Shadow of Elisabeth' and since February 2015 its volunteers have been collecting material relating to the final years of Bilston steelworks. They have brought together the personal testimonies of key witnesses, previously unseen archive material, historical photos and rare artefacts for a major exhibition called 'Tempered Not Quenched: The Battle for Bilston Steelworks'.

As the text for the exhibition emphasises, Elisabeth was the final blast furnace in the Black Country and was a symbol of the region's industrial past and its future. In response the Bilston Joint Trade Unions Action Committee (BJUAC) devised a more high-profile defence campaign: enlisting the support of Wolverhampton's Trade Council to organise a mass 'We Want to Work' demonstration through the centre of Wolverhampton in June 1978.

Dennis Turner told the protesters: "The Government must be told the extent to which this area is going into decline. Instead of being the workshop of the world, the Black Country is going to turn into one of the biggest backwaters. If that happens the whole country will

be worse off." By March 1979 the battle of Bilston was reaching its zenith. The steelmen marched through London, lobbying parliament before holding a mass vigil outside a meeting of union leaders. A delegation of steelmen headed to Fleet Street, demanding to meet with relevant industrial correspondents. Upon their return to Bilston, the BJUAC organised a mass meeting, where they announced that the ISTC was calling for a public enquiry. The Government, however, refused the request.

The following October a crowd of angry Bilstonians congregated in 'safe exclusion zones' around the town to watch a demolition team from Sheffield unceremoniously tear down their beloved Elisabeth.

A letter from a Mrs Beasley to the Express & Star summed up the thoughts of the town: "Will Bilston, like the phoenix, ever rise from the ashes and become that thriving, bustling industrial market town we knew and loved? Rest in Peace, Elisabeth. We shall miss you and all that you stood for."

The exhibition at Bilston Craft Gallery is open to the public until September 17. For more details, contact project co-ordinator Greig Campbell at greig@itsoe.co.uk or on 07585 669833.

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Fans Craving more after forest acts wow fans

"I'll give you everything, if you give me everything," announced Brit-award winning singer/songwriter James Bay as he kicked off the Forest Live concerts on Cannock Chase.

The 25-year-old kept up his side of the bargain as he delivered a terrific set to get the three nights under way. Opening with Collide, he quickly moved onto Craving - one of the hits from his best-selling album Chaos and the Calm - before moving on to If You Ever Want To Be in Love among the first half of his act.

The packed crowd took a while to get into their stride, but as dusk fell and Bay moved into Let It Go, he clearly had the masses rapt on his side. They didn't need asking to join in as Hold Back The River ended the encore, following a truly uplifting cover of Proud Mary.

Rocking

There was no trouble getting the crowd warmed up on Sunday though as charismatic Kaiser Chiefs frontman Ricky Wilson immediately had the thousands of fans rocking. The Leeds band's cracking set brought three incredible nights of music to an end.

Following able support from Vitamin and Spring King, Stay Together opened proceedings. New material and old favourites, I Predict a Riot and Never Miss A Beat among them, followed. And, after a performance of Cannons, Wilson, dressed to begin with in bright yellow jacket, declared: "If you didn't know that one, you will know the next." And chart-topping Ruby duly followed.

There was a ticker tape ending after Coming Home and the encore ended with Oh My God. Quite fitting.

In between, the fans were treated to



Award-winning James Bay on stage



Kaiser Chiefs singer Ricky Wilson



Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbot entertained the crowds on Saturday

the sounds of Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbott. They were treated to a mixture of classics from their collaborations as part of The Beautiful South, Paul's first group The Housemartins and their new record Wisdom, Laughter and Lines.

The duo kicked off with the new and upbeat Wives 1, 2 & 3 before working their way through old favourites. Hips

were swinging as the set wound down for Perfect Ten before finishing things off with their famous rendition of The Isley Brothers' Caravan of Love.

Two encores followed. First up, they smashed through A Little Time and You Keep It All In as confetti and giant balloons soared through the sky. It came to an end with the lovely Woman In The Wall.

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Hot weather danger to dogs

THE number of complaints made to the RSPCA about dogs and animals being left in hot cars in the West Midlands is continuing to rise, new figures reveal.

Concerned charity bosses have launched a new campaign urging pet owners to take extra care of their animals.

The RSPCA attended 230 call-outs relating to dogs in hot cars across the region in 2015 – a rise from 223 in 2014 and 124 in 2013.

The charity receives thousands of reports of dogs suffering from heat exposure across the country every year – that equates to one call every hour.

As well as animals left in hot cars, this can include dogs outside who are suffering from the heat as well as those in conservatories or caravans.

In 2015, the RSPCA received a total of 8,779 calls nationwide to report incidents of dogs suffering from heat exposure – more than 3,000 more than in 2010.

Penguin waddles into TV spotlight



CBeebies presenter Andy Day takes a break from filming at Dudley Zoo with new arrival Sebastian the penguin

SOME of Dudley Zoo's newest arrivals have had a brush with stardom by entering the spotlight for a new children's TV programme.

The zoo's hand-reared Humboldt penguin Sebastian and three newborn peafowl chicks will soon be appearing in a new CBeebies series, hosted by children's presenter Andy Day. Andy and his crew visited last week to film the chicks for the autumn TV show.

Resource offering careers guidance

AN INITIATIVE to help young people make informed career decisions is being offered to students in the West Midlands.

Holly Hall Academy in Dudley is one of the first schools in the region to implement 'Start', an online resource which provides access to comprehensive careers guidance for teachers, parents and students.

The software is designed to help young people connect ideas, interests and aspirations to jobs and educational pathways.

At the heart of Start is a job bank which includes more than 1,600 jobs providing detailed information on the qualifications required, typical salaries and the user's own suitability for the role. Linked to this is live market information, showing opportunities in the student's locality, giving a real indication of the current labour market and job availability. The software is developed by careers guidance company U-Explore.

Zoe Turton, Intervention Co-ordinator at Holly Hall Academy, said: "We work closely with students to ensure they have all the information they need to make the best choices for their future. Start has proven to be a resource the students are already benefiting from.

"The software takes into account the personal preferences of the user and suggests roles which are suited to their qualities, skills and work preferences. It's a unique tool which we are confident will have a significant impact on the futures of our students."

Death crash driver fails to win appeal to cut sentence

A DRIVER who smashed into a bus stop killing a university student and seriously injuring her friend has been told by judges that his eight-year jail term is deserved.

Sukvinder Singh Mannan was driving at 101mph after a high speed race when he lost control of his red Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution and ploughed into the bus stop on Hagley Road, Quinton, in May 2014. The impact killed Rebecca McManus, 21, from Oldbury, while her friend Harriet Barnsley, also then 21, was catastrophically injured.

Miss McManus died almost instantly, whereas Miss Barnsley suffered serious brain injuries, a smashed pelvis and two collapsed lungs.

A breath test on Mannan showed up positive but at hospital he refused to allow a sample of his blood be taken.

Mannan, 34, of Roundhills Road, Halesowen, admitted causing death by dangerous driving last year. He also pleaded guilty to causing serious injury by dangerous driving and failing to provide a blood sample. He was jailed in December.

Last week he asked judges at London's Criminal Appeal Court to soften his punishment. But Lord Justice

Lloyd Jones said: "It is said that there was no clear evidence that a substantial amount of alcohol was consumed. We are quite satisfied that there was such evidence. The paramedic smelled drink on his breath and his speech was slurred. The reason he was driving at 101mph was because he was racing. The racing was a very significant cause of the death of Rebecca."

He added that Miss Barnsley will be seriously disabled for the rest of her life. Dismissing the appeal, the judge sitting with Mr Justice William Davis and Judge Gregory Dickinson QC, said such a serious offence "justified a very high sentence".



Sukvinder Singh Mannan

Views sought on Metro Mayor

A CONSULTATION has been launched on what powers the Metro Mayor should have within the new West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

The post is due to be filled following an election in May next year and residents are being asked to comment on what decisions the figurehead should be allowed to make.

Powers could extend to determining local tax levels and business rates, and could also include the final say over housebuilding and transport schemes for the region.

Councillor Bob Sleigh, chairman of the WMCA, said: "The idea of a mayor for the WMCA area is to provide a strong voice for the region. They would also be an ambassador for the area."

To take part in the consultation visit westmidlandsccombinedauthority.org.uk



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Collectors can find message in a bottle

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

By John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



GLASS and pottery bottles of all kinds have been collected and displayed in homes for many years – and the trend continues today.

Vintage bottles that sell well at auction range from the very sophisticated (the beautiful perfume variety) to the downright odd.

We recently sold at auction a collection of 25 bottles believed to have been used in a Victorian laboratory!

Some people are avid collectors of a particular style of bottle, such as branded beer bottles or apothecary bottles, other just buy them if they look attractive.

Beer bottle collecting is big business, some people have hundreds, even thousands, and are always looking for more.

The first beer bottle was supposedly 'created' by one Hertfordshire priest Dr Alexander Nowell, who first came up with the idea of filling a glass bottle with beer for a fishing trip, the idea caught on and bottled beer then became available in the late 1600s and early 1700s.

By the latter half of the nineteenth century the glass beer bottle was being widely manufactured, with corks until the screw top was invented in 1879.

Glass beer bottles come in different colours and sizes – as do those made from pottery and a nice Victorian pottery beer bottle would sell especially well in the saleroom.

Small green glass bottles that once contained medicinal and other substances that might have proved fatal if drunk in quantity have ridges around the sides, presumably to alert someone looking for a headache cure by candlelight – and these are nice displayed in a bathroom.

Old wine and spirits bottles with interesting vintage labels are attractive as candle holders, and vintage wine bottle always looks good displayed in a wooden rack within a kitchen (unless you have your own wine cellar, of course!).

Some old wine bottles are very much sought after by collectors, who will pay hundreds of pounds for a nice 1880s bottle, for example, or another from the same era made from hand-blown glass.

Those manufactured abroad, especially in France, Italy and Spain, also do well with the bidders.

Perfume bottles can be very decorative, look out for the really old ones and also for very pretty ones dating from the 1950s – some of these were tiny, in gorgeous colours, designed for handbags.

You can also pick up pottery hot water bottles, sometimes with designs on them, for very reasonable prices and these, whilst probably quite uncomfortable to rest your feet on, look good in almost any room – and can double as unusual vases.

You can pick up all kinds of collectable bottles in antiques centres and at auction for very reasonable prices, just make sure before you buy that they aren't chipped or cracked.

Perry and Phillips Auctioneers hold sales of antiques and collectables on the first Tuesday of each month. Valuation days, for sale items only, are held every Wednesday at the Mill Street saleroom, Low Town, Bridgnorth, from 10am until 4pm.



Embracing the beauty of the great outdoors



Nature inspires many designs

TODAY we went for a walk with the dog, four miles of beautiful unspoiled countryside, along the canal, across the fields, through trees and flowers, our very green and pleasant lands.

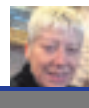
I personally don't do 'outdoor', my idea of camping is a hotel nearest to the festival site but it occurred to me how much fashion is influenced by nature and how much I appreciate the beauty of it. Designers and artists have endless subject matter to work with and have used it for centuries, most of us will have clothing, fabrics, pictures and cushions with a natural theme.

The newest fabric prints are of leaves and flowers and the love of everything vintage brings pretty floral sprigs, birds, butterflies and bees to our clothing, accessories, household items and body art.

The glorious primary colours of the narrowboats and painted canal art can be seen on some of the latest childrenswear, the delightful colours in the summer gardens and hanging baskets can be seen adorning our high street shop rails and online sales sites and the insects, birds and flowers adorn the

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



newest costume jewellery. I've been to a couple of weddings lately where the majority of female guests wore summery floral dresses, short, long, straight and full, various styles but bright, cheerful prints, contrasted with toning plain colour shoes, bag and fascinator. There is so much choice, the styling is up to you and your body shape, there is something to suit everyone, and if you are not comfortable with wearing an all over print, add a colourful printed scarf to your outfit.

Look at www.missguided.co.uk/dresses/floral-dresses

http://www.newlook.com/shop/womens/dresses/floral-dresses/_/N-9utZ1z141tt

Brides are looking at the more unusual flowers and greenery to build their bouquets and floral displays and the fashion in having flower girls revives the embroidered detail

on their dresses. For the men in our life the floral shirt is a popular choice, mostly small print in subtle blues, see <http://www.houseof-fraser.co.uk/designer+shirts+for+men/204-default,s.c.html?prefn1=Pattern%20MW&prefv1=Floral>, <http://www.asos.com/Men/Shirts/Printed-Shirts/Cat/pgcategory.aspx?cid=13803>

Summer beachwear is covered in large leaf designs, two colour combinations and monochrome and works for both male and female.

Horses, dogs and rabbits adorn the new tapestry style cushion covers and bedding. We are heavily influenced by the flora and fauna of our island and choose to surround ourselves in it. The Designers Guild (<https://www.designersguild.com/uk/new/11299>) shows the new contemporary styling of flowers in our furnishings, bright airy greens, pastel blues and watercolour pinks, toned with earthy prints, rough brick, aged wood and natural stone artwork.

Bring the outdoors in and enjoy the beauty! For more details see www.jflflexclusive.com and www.jflgarmentsolutions.co.uk Follow: [jflifeandloves on tumblr](https://www.tumblr.com/jflifeandloves)



Many believe social media posts are exaggerated



Parenting author Sarah Ockwell-Smith



Sharing the lows as well as the highs will make you more human

Social media: Are you an over-sharing parent?



Social media can offer great support

WHEN a baby or child achieves something fantastic – from taking their first steps to coming top in an exam – it's hard for many parents not to jump straight on social media to share it with the world.

But have you ever thought about how your post may be perceived by others?

New research shows 93 per cent of parents believe social media encourages them to 'overshare' about their babies, and more than a quarter (27 per cent) say they feel under pressure to keep up every week, with 12 per cent admitting to feeling this pressure almost daily.

STRETCHING THE TRUTH? The problem, it seems, is many social media fans who are also parents feel other mums and dads tend to make claims about their children that are either untrue or exaggerated, that they're boasting unnecessarily, or that whatever the truth of the post, it may make other parents feel bad because their child hasn't achieved the same thing, according to the research commissioned by WaterWipes.

The top culprits identified in the survey are 'Super Mum' posts (ie, mums who claim to fit in a thousand things a day and still look glamorous); Unrealistic achievements

By Keeley Bolger

(such as, 'Back in my skinny jeans after two weeks'), and New baby milestones – like baby's first steps, sleeping through the night, etc.

VIRTUAL SUPPORT

Mum-of-four and parenting author Sarah Ockwell-Smith points out that social media can be a great virtual support network for mothers, building a community on which they can lean on and turn to for advice.

"For a lot of new mothers, this is an incredibly positive experience," she says. "When your baby achieves something, you'll likely want to shout it from the rooftops, both in the real world or on social media."

"However, the comparison with others online can cause some mothers to be overwhelmed by feelings that they aren't good enough, and that their children should be doing better."

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

The survey found Facebook was the biggest oversharing platform for new parents, with Instagram voted second biggest.

A third of mums said they always 'like' or 'comment' on posts from parent friends, to help them feel positive reinforcement, and 17 per cent admitted that receiving likes and comments on their own posts helped them feel validated as a parent. Indeed, 16

per cent of new mums believe posting online helps them feel less alone when they're looking after their baby.

However, some are cynical about other people's posts, with 33 per cent of mums and 24 per cent of dads saying they don't believe posts are true.

UNPREDICTABLE

Ockwell-Smith warns it's not easy to predict how your social media comments will affect others.

"You may be excited that your baby has just started crawling, yet one of your friends who sees your post on social media may be concerned about her baby's development and lack of motor skills. There are so many possible reactions that are often impossible to anticipate," she notes.

But she stresses this doesn't mean you should never share pictures or updates of your child's progress.

"The vast majority of your friends and family are likely to be thrilled to coo over your baby photos, however there are ways to be more mindful of what you post."

"Be a more 'sensitive sharer', particularly if you're aware of friends having a hard time parenting or even conceiving a baby."

"Don't fret about sharing the 'imperfect' moments – motherhood is glossed over too much. Sharing bad days or messy moments can make you much more human."

fast the ticket

Guys and Dolls are here

Sing all about it
See Page 25



Lots of laughs
See Page 25

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5, 12, 19, 26 Sep

EASTBOURNE
1, 8, 15, 22 Aug
5, 12, 19, 26 Sep

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& OSTEND
1, 8, 15, 22 Aug
5, 12, 19, 26 Sep

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Rufus Wainwright



Friday, 7pm
Symphony Hall, Birmingham
The genre-bending singer-songwriter covers favourites from his back catalogue along with highlights from his recent *Take All My Love: 9 Shakespeare Sonnets* album.
Visit www.thsh.co.uk

Walter Trout



Wednesday, 8pm
Robin 2, Bilston
Following recovery from a liver transplant, the award-winning American blues guitarist, formerly of Canned Heat, has just released his *Alive in Amsterdam* album.
Visit www.therobin.co.uk

Ocean Colour Scene



Friday & Saturday, 3.30pm
Moseley Park, B'ham
Homecoming gig for the mod rockers with support from The Twang, Reverend and the Makers, The Sherlocks and Blast Off DJs. Saturday sold out.
Visit www.moseleyfolk.co.uk/tickets/ocean-colour-scene

Sarah Millican



Saturday & Sunday, 8pm
Symphony Hall, Birmingham
The South Shields comedian brings her new show, *Outsider*, for two nights at this venue before returning on August 29. Be warned, she's very rude (but always polite).
Visit www.thsh.co.uk

POP

Pop Chorus Annual Show 2016
Sun at 7pm,
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ.
Call 0121 780 3333

Quantic: 1000 Watts Tour
Tonight at 7pm - 10pm,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath,
Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

Russell Watson: Songs From The Heart
Thu at 7.30pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

Rufus Wainwright
Tonight at 7pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

ROCK & METAL

Catapult Club Feat. Xilla
Tomorrow at 6pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham,
B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

Ginger Wildheart
Tue at 7pm,
The Slade Rooms,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Who's Who: The Who Tribute
Tonight at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Hayseed Dixie
Thu at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Jean Genie: David Bowie Tribute
Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Basement
Tonight at 7pm,
The Slade Rooms,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

David Hamilton's Rock N Roll Back The Years
Tonight at 7.30pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

Sun Kil Moon
Tue at 7.30pm - 11pm,
The Glee Club,
Birmingham,
B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

The Stones: Rolling Stones Tribute
Tomorrow at 7pm,
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Quill
Tonight at 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

Raging Speedhorn
Wed at 7pm - 11pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham,
B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

The David Cross Band
Sun at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

JAZZ, BLUES, SOUL FUNK & MOTOWN

Justin Thurgur's Afro-Jazz Sextet
Tonight at 5pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

The Drifters
Thu at 7.30pm,
Prince Of Wales Centre,
Cannock, WS11 1DE.
Call 01543 578762

Sentimental Journey Of Jazz
Sun at 6pm - 7pm,
The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, B16 8AE.
Call 0121 643 5858

Walter Trout
Wed at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Joyce Moholoagae
Wed at 7.30pm - 11pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

FOLK, COUNTRY & ACOUSTIC

Tinariwen
Tue at 8.30pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

R'N'B, HIP HOP RAP & REGGAE

The Piragons: John Holt Tribute
Tonight,
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

CLASSICAL

CBSO Community Choir Showcase
Tomorrow at 7pm,
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ.
Call 0121 780 3333

Services For Education - Music Service Gala Concerts 2016
Mon at 7pm, Tue at 7pm, Wed at 7pm, Thu at 7pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

FESTIVALS

Birmingham And Solihull International Jazz And Blues Festival
Tonight,
Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, B15 2TS.
Call 0121 414 7333

Birmingham Jazz JQ Legends Festival
Tomorrow,
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, B3 3DH.
Call 0121 303 1966

CLUBBING

The Drum & Bass Summer Convention 2016
Tomorrow at 10pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

Propaganda
Tonight - tomorrow at 10.30pm - 1.30am,
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

COMEDY

Thursday Night Comedy Carousel
Thu at 8pm,
The Glee Club, Birmingham, B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

Yeti's Demon Dive Bar
Tue at 8pm, Wed at 8pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

The Best In Live Stand-up Comedy
Tonight at 8.15pm, tomorrow at 8.15pm,
The Glee Club, Birmingham, B5 4TD. Call 0871 472 0400

EdinBrum Previews: Jollyboat & Gavin Webster
Thu at 7.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Ken Dodd: The Happiness Show
Tomorrow at 7pm, Sun at 7pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, SY3 8FT. Call 01743 281281

Sarah Millican: Outsider
Tomorrow at 8pm - 10pm, Sun at 8pm - 10pm, £25 - £26
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

THEATRE

Sasha Regan's All Male HMS Pinafore
Mon at 7.30pm, Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 2.30pm, 7.30pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

Dogfight
Tonight at 7.30pm, Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Much Ado About Nothing
Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Doreen's Grand Night Out
Tonight at 7.30pm,
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.
Call 01543 412121

Once Upon A Time: Dance Connection
Sun at 2pm, 6pm,
Oakengates Theatre, Telford, TF2 6EP.
Call 01952 382382

The Musicals: TACT
Tonight at 7.30pm, tomorrow at 7.30pm,
Oakengates Theatre, Telford, TF2 6EP.
Call 01952 382382

Elmhurst Dance School
Tonight at 7pm, Tomorrow at 2pm,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Macbeth
Sun at 7.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Les Miserables: School Edition: Get Your Wiggle On
Tonight at 7.30pm, Tomorrow at 1pm, 6.30pm, Sun at 1pm, 6.30pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

Forever In Blue Jeans
Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

The Chris And Pui Show
Tomorrow at 11am, 2pm,
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.
Call 01543 412121

Guys And Dolls
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, Thu at 2.30pm, 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

Showstopper! The Improvised Musical
Tonight at 7.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Mamma Mia!
Tonight at 7.30pm - 10pm, Tomorrow at 2.30pm - 5.30pm, Mon at 7.30pm - 10pm, Tue at 7.30pm - 10pm, Wed at 2.30pm - 5.30pm, 7.30pm - 10pm, Thu at 7.30pm - 10pm, £28 - £60
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

GALLERIES & EXHIBITIONS

Antiques For Everyone Summer Fair
Thu at 11am - 5pm,
The NEC Birmingham, B40 1NT.
Call 0121 780 4141

Land, Sea And Air
Tomorrow at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 12pm - 4pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
The New Art Gallery Walsall, WS2 8LG. Call 01922 654400

Ruth Claxton Exhibition
Tomorrow at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 12pm - 4pm,
The New Art Gallery Walsall, WS2 8LG. Call 01922 654400

Kan Xuan
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Tue at 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm, Thu at 11am - 5pm,
Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS.
Call 0121 248 0708

Jesse Bruton
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Tue at 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm, Thu at 11am - 5pm,
Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS.
Call 0121 248 0708

All The World's A Stage
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, B15 2TS.
Call 0121 414 7333

Inspire 16: The Young Creatives Of Birmingham
Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, B3 3DH.
Call 0121 303 1966

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Guys and Dolls? That's just Grand



Sit Down You're Rockin' The Boat – Guys and Dolls is coming to Wolverhampton photo by Johan Persson

A MUCH-LOVED show that is currently taking London's West End by storm is coming to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

London's hit revival of Guys and Dolls has Hollywood star Rebel Wilson as nightclub singer Miss Adelaide but the touring production doesn't lack West End quality, with Wicked star Louise Dearman – who uniquely has played both Elphaba and Glinda in that hit show – in the starring role.

Burrows, Swerling and Loesser's sizzling New York tale of gamblers,

gangsters and nightclub singers features some of Broadway's greatest show-stopping tunes. These include Luck Be a Lady, Sit Down You're Rockin' the Boat and My Time of Day.

This revival also benefits from dazzling choreography by world-renowned Cuban ballet star Carlos Acosta with top choreographer Andrew Wright

Richard Fleeshman, known to thousands of soap fans as Coronation Street's Craig Harris plays Sky Masterson and is a West End favour-

ite after starring opposite Sheridan Smith in Legally Blonde.

Movie, TV and stage star Maxwell Caulfield plays Nathan Detroit. Maxwell's film credits include Grease 2, The Colbys, Chicago in London and Singin' in the Rain during its UK tour. Anna O'Byrne plays Sarah Brown and her previous credits include The Phantom Of The Opera and Love Never Dies.

Tickets are sale online at grandtheatre.co.uk or can be purchased by calling the box office on 01902 429212.



From Basra to Brierley Hill

PAUL Tonkinson may be a self-proclaimed 'professional northerner' living in London but it's in the Midlands where he really feels at home.

"It's always been one of my favourite places to gig," he says. "I just seem to get on there, the crowd always seem really relaxed. They don't take themselves too seriously, which I like, because I don't take myself too seriously either."

The 46-year-old from Scarborough says he is looking forward to taking the stage at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on Saturday night, appearing alongside Doc Brown and The Fizzogs for the first instalment of Live At The Civic, a new comedy night featuring TV names alongside top local talent.

Some 500 tickets have already been sold for the gig, not that it will faze Tonkinson, who supported Michael McIntyre on his record-breaking 50-date Happy and Glorious arena tour. McIntyre hand-picked the award-winning comic, a two-time winner of Time Out Comedian of the Year who also briefly co-presented Channel 4's The Big Breakfast.

The arenas were a far cry from the makeshift stages in war-torn Afghanistan and Iraq, where Tonkinson has been a regular visitor to entertain the troops. "It's scary sometimes but the gigs over there are fantastic," he says. "I did some gigs in Basra at the height of the mortar attacks. You would be on stage and everyone would hear a noise and throw themselves to the ground, myself included. Then you would just get up and carry on with your set."

Tickets on 0870 320 7000 or www.bhillcivic.co.uk/whats-on/comedy

Summer in the city means all that jazz

THE 32nd Birmingham & Solihull Jazz & Blues Festival starts tomorrow (Friday), offering more than 200 performances in some 90 venues in ten days – and the vast majority of the gigs are free.

The best of homegrown jazz talent will rub shoulders with acts from the USA and Canada, India and across Europe from Spain to Lithuania.

There will also be dance and music workshops, exhibitions and plenty of chances to meet the musicians.

For details see www.birminghamjazzfestival.com, see the festival's Facebook page or call 0121 454 7020.

Pop chorus put new twist on chart hits

FROM The Beatles to Boyzone and ELO to Olly Murs, the 190 adults and children of Solihull Pop Chorus are set to raise the roof at Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday at 7pm. They will be performing their uplifting versions of some best-loved pop classics in their annual show.

Created in 2013 by choir director Anya Small, Solihull Pop Chorus brings together amateur singers ranging in age from six to 70, many of whom had never sung in public before – and the result is magical. The choir is now in high demand.

Tickets cost £17. See www.thsh.co.uk or call 0121 780 3333.

Ruthie sings songs from the top shows

WEST End star Ruthie Henshall is the special guest in song and dance show That's Entertainment at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday, July 23.

The Olivier Award winning actress and musical theatre star, who had major roles in Crazy For You, Chicago and most recently Billy Elliot the Musical, will be joining the celebration of show tunes from the 1930s, 40s and 50s. It features such songs as That's Entertainment, Puttin' On The Ritz and There is Nothing like a Dame, and there is also a knees-up tribute to London's Pearly Kings and Queens.

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Normandy, or choose more unusual destinations such as Iceland or Russia.

There is also the chance to travel further afield and discover a wide variety of once-in-a-lifetime destinations including places such as America and Canada, India, Japan, or New Zealand.

New for 2016, Riviera has introduced Australia to their portfolio. Here, there are plenty of things to see and do including the chance to visit Ayers Rock, spend time in elbourne, Sydney and Cairns, and enjoy a catamaran cruise to the Great Barrier Reef.

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CHOICE



Chloe Howman

Casualty (BBC1, 9.25pm)
Rita receives a frosty reception from her colleagues after her lies to Iain were revealed, but everyone must put aside their animosity when a pair of love-rivals are admitted to the ED after a scuffle at a hotel leaves them both impaled on the same spike. Meanwhile, Jez is so busy showing off that he forgets to fill the ambulance with petrol. Connie considers telling Grace about her relationship with Jacob, and Robyn is devastated following her break-up with Glen. Chloe Howman, Michael Stevenson, Derek Thompson, Jaye Griffiths, Amanda Mealing and Charles Venn star.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live. 11.30 Mary Berry's Absolute Favourites. (R) 12.00 BBC News; Weather. 12.15 Bargain Hunt. (R) 1.00 Athletics: Diamond League Highlights. 2.15 Jessica Ennis-Hill - A Coach's Story. 2.45 Live Davis Cup Tennis: Serbia v Great Britain. 5.45 BBC News. 5.55 Regional Programme.

6.00 Pointless Celebrities. Ruth Badger, Solomon Aikatar, Carl Fogarty, Jimmy Bullard, Craig Phillips, Nikki Graham, Jamie Laing and Alex Mytton compete in a reality TV-themed edition of the quiz show. (R)

6.50 The Getaway Car. Five more duos hit the track in South Africa this week, including a retired husband-and-wife from Somerset, a pair of chatty sisters from Ulster and all-singing friends from Kent.

7.40 The National Lottery: In It to Win It. Quiz show in which five contestants answer questions to scoop a big cash prize. Includes the Lotto and Thunderball draws. Last in the series.

8.30 The Musketeers. The heroes' pursuit of Grimaud leads them to a battle-scarred village inhabited solely by women, where they struggle to win the trust of the community's cunning leader, who seems to be hiding something from them. When the town is attacked by a band of war deserters, the Musketeers must persuade the women to let them help in fighting back, only to uncover the dark secret at the heart of the village's history. Meanwhile, at the Louvre, Anne makes a bold confession to secure her son's future. Guest starring Meera Syal.

9.25 Casualty. Rita receives a frosty reception from her colleagues, while Jez forgets to fill the ambulance with petrol. Robyn is gutted after her break-up with Glen.

10.15 BBC News: Weather; National Lottery Update.

10.35 Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest. (2006) Captain Jack Sparrow battles to save his soul from the legendary Davy Jones and his fearsome sea monster. Swashbuckling adventure sequel, starring Johnny Depp and Orlando Bloom.

12.55 Weather for the Week Ahead. 1.00 BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 The Women's Football Show. (R) **6.35 Film:** Once Upon a Honeymoon. (1942) **8.25 Film:** Ivanhoe. (1952) **10.10 Homes Under the Hammer.** (R) **11.10 Natural World - Snow Monkeys.** (R) **12.00 The Hairy Bikers' Northern Exposure.** (R) **1.00 Film:** The Gaine Mutiny. (1954) Second World War naval drama, starring Humphrey Bogart. **3.00 Coast.** (R) **4.00 Escape to the Country.** (R) **4.45 Flog It!** (R) **5.45 Live Davis Cup Tennis.** Serbia v Great Britain.

7.00 Gardeners' World. Monty Don demonstrates that it is not too late to starting growing vegetables and explains which types can be sown now, before sinking plants in pots into the borders of the Spring Garden. Plus, a hosta National Collection holder shares the secrets of his propagating success, and Rachel de Thame visits theatre impresario Sir Cameron Mackintosh's garden. (R)

7.30 Dad's Army. Wilson allows the vicar and the verger to enlist in the Home Guard while Mainwaring is in hospital, but their over-enthusiastic approach to man-management brings the wrath of Warden Hodges down upon the platoon. Comedy, first shown in 1973, starring Arthur Lowe, John Le Mesurier and Bill Pertwee. (R)

8.00 Golf: The Open Championship. Hazel Irvine presents highlights of the third day of the prestigious event, which takes place at Royal Troon Golf Club in Ayrshire. The biggest story of the third round last year at St Andrews was surely Irish amateur Paul Dunne's rise to a share of first place following a fine six-under-par round of 66. He was in illustrious company at the top of the leaderboard alongside PGA Championship title-holder Jason Day and the 2010 victor in this tournament, Louis Oosthuizen, while Jordan Spieth was just one stroke behind.

10.00 The Rack Pack. Comedy drama based on the glory days of professional snooker in the 1980s and the rivalry between Alex "Hurricane" Higgins and Steve Davis. Luke Treadaway and Will Merrick star.

11.30 Film: Youth in Revolt. (2009) Comedy, starring Michael Cera and Portia Doubleday.

12.55 Film: Repo Chick. (2009) **2.20 This Is BBC Two.**

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.20 Pat & Stan.** (R) **6.30 Dino Dan.** (R) **6.45 Dino Dan.** (R) **6.55 Signed Stories:** Share a Story. (R) **7.00 Sooty.** (R) **7.15 Super 4.** (R) **7.35 Thunderbirds Are Go.** (R) **8.00 Ninjago: Rise of the Snakes.** (R) **8.25 ITV News.** **8.30 Weekend.** **9.25 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **11.20 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **11.20 Who's Doing the Dishes?** (R) **12.20 ITV News:** Weather. **12.25 The Wine Show.** **1.30 Big Box Little Box.** (R) **2.00 Doc Martin.** (R) **3.00 The Chase.** (R) **4.00 Midsummer Murders.** (R)

6.00 Regional Programme: Weather. **6.15 ITV News:** Weather.

6.30 You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates another selection of comical mishaps filmed by viewers, including an unusual take on Ninja Warrior UK, a preview of what Ant and Dec might look like in their sixties, and a fine example of why riding a bicycle is not the best time to take a selfie. Plus, a family is soaked by what appears to be an exploding colon. (R)

7.00 Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show, asking three contestants to "see it and say it" as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000.

7.45 Film: The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug. (2013) Premiere. The party of dwarves and their hobbit ally continue the quest to reclaim their lost kingdom, journeying through the forest home of ancestral enemy the elves and "really facing the dragon that drove them from their home. Meanwhile, Gandalf the wizard investigates the rise of a mysterious dark power. Part two of Peter Jackson's fantasy adventure trilogy based on J.R.R. Tolkien's novel, starring Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage and Orlando Bloom.

10.45 ITV News: Weather.

11.05 Film: Carry On Up the Jungle. (1970) A Victorian explorer recalls his expedition to tropical Africa in search of a rare bird, where he discovered an all-female tribe. Comedy, starring Sid James and Frankie Howerd.

12.45 Jackpot247. Interactive gaming. **3.00 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **3.50 ITV Nightscreen.**

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The King of Queens. (R) **6.35 Motor Sport:** British GT. **7.00 Gillette World Sport.** **7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **7.55 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **8.25 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **8.55 Dare to Believe:** Natasha Baker. (R) **9.00 The Morning Line.** **10.00 Car SOS.** (R) **11.00 The Superhumans Show.** **11.30 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **12.00 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **12.30 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **12.55 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **2.00 Channel 4 Racing.** Live coverage from Newbury, Newmarket and Market Rasen. **4.30 A Place in the Sun:** Summer Sun. **5.30 Channel 4 News.** **5.55 Dare to Believe:** Ali Jawad. (R)

6.00 Gogglesprogs. Young TV viewers watch a range of programmes, from entertainment shows to documentaries and classic films, as well as up-to-the-minute news reports. In this instalment, the youngsters offer their honest and hilarious views on Wallace and Gromit, The Getaway Car and 24 Hours in A&E. (R)

7.00 Film: Star Trek. (2009) The trainee crew members of the starship Enterprise embark on their maiden flight, which pits them against a Romulan commander from the future who is planning a horrific revenge on those he blames for a tragedy in his own time. Sci-fi adventure based on the original TV series, starring Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto, Eric Bana, Zoe Saldana and Leonard Nimoy.

9.30 Film: Shutter Island. (2010) A US marshal, traumatised by his past, heads to a hospital for the criminally insane on a remote island to investigate the disappearance of a woman who murdered her children. As the case unfolds, he begins to suspect the doctors are hiding something - and that a grisly fate awaits all the patients on a sinister ward. Martin Scorsese's mystery thriller, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Ruffalo and Ben Kingsley.

12.10 Dare to Believe: Jordanne Whitley. A profile of the British wheelchair tennis player. (R) **12.15 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA.** Part one of two. The Burger Kitchen in Los Angeles. (R) **1.05 Film:** Something in the Air. (2012) Drama, starring Clement Mlayayer. **3.05 Hollyoaks: Omnibus.** She prepares for his first working day at The Bean and is determined to stay clean, until Cameron tries to lead him back into temptation. (R) **5.10 Fifteen to One.** (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **8.25 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.** (R) **9.00 The Saturday Show Live.** **11.10 Police Interceptors:** The Fatal Four. (R) **12.10 Police Interceptors.** (R) **1.10 Police Interceptors.** (R) **2.10 World's Strongest Man.** (R) **3.10 World's Strongest Man.** (R) **4.05 World's Strongest Man.** (R) **5.05 World's Strongest Man.** (R)

6.05 World's Strongest Man. Europe's Strongest Man. Action from the contest, which took place at Headingley, where home favourite Eddie Hall and 2014 champion Hafthor Bjornsson were among those taking part. Presented by James Richardson, Charlie Webster and Terry Hollands. (R)

7.00 Cricket on 5. England v Pakistan. Mark Nicholas presents action from the third day of the First Test in the four-match series, which took place at Lord's. With commentary by Geoffrey Boycott, Michael Vaughan and Simon Hughes.

8.00 NCIS. Part one of two. A Naval intelligence ensign is killed in an unusual car accident. Gibbs and his team are reunited with old friend Ned Dornegut, who is now working with NCIS cyber operations, and NSA attorney Jake Malloy to investigate the case, and discover a conspiracy involving terrorist recruitment on the internet.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Big Brother. Highlights of another 24 hours in the Big Brother house, following the housemates as they recover from the week-long Annihilation theme and react to Friday night's "eviction massacre". Narrated by Marcus Bentley.

10.00 Bellator Fight Night: Live from London. Paul Daley v Douglas Lima. Coverage from the O2 Arena in London, where the Welterweight clash is the scheduled main event for Bellator 158.

12.00 SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. **3.10 Big Brother.** Daily round-up of highlights. (R) **4.00 Puppies Make You Laugh Out Loud.** Clip show featuring entertaining pups. (R) **4.50 Divine Designs.** Two notable Victorian architects. (R) **5.15 House Doctor.** A bland property near Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. (R) **5.40 Angels of Jarm.** Angel Mick helps at a group picnic. (R) **5.50 Roary the Racing Car.** (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Crossing England in a Punt: River of Dreams **8.00** Who Were the Greeks? **9.00** Beck: The Japanese Painting **10.30** Sinatra: All or Nothing at All **12.25** Sing's the Great American Songbook **1.25** The Secret Life of Bob Monkhouse **2.55** Top of the Pops: 1982 **3.35** Close

ITV2
12.05 Catchphrase Celebrity Couples Special **1.05** Ninja Warrior UK **2.05** Film: Kindergarten Cop (1990) **3.05** FYI Daily **3.10** Film: Kindergarten Cop (1990) **4.15** Film: Back to the Future Part III (1990) **5.15** FYI Daily **5.20** Film: Back to the Future Part III (1990) **6.40** Film: You've Got Mail (1998) **7.40** FYI Daily **7.45** Film: Shaun of the Dead (2004) **11.05** Family Guy **12.35** American Dad! **1.30** The Cleveland Show **2.55** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
12.50 Foyle's War **3.05** Film: George and Mildred: The Movie (1980) **4.05** FYI Daily **4.10** Film: George and Mildred: The Movie (1980) **4.55** The Zoo **7.00** Doc Martin **8.00** Lewis **10.00** A Touch of Frost **12.00** The Jury **1.05** City Lights **1.55** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.55 BRDC Formula 3 Championship Highlights **1.00** Tour de France Highlights **2.00** Tour de France Live. Coverage of stage 14 of this year's race. **4.30** Storage Wars **4.55** Monster Carp **6.00** The Motorbike Show **7.00** Tour de France Highlights **8.00** Film: For Your Eyes Only (1981) **9.10** FYI Daily **9.15** Film: For Your Eyes Only (1981) **10.45** Film: Out for Justice (1991) **11.45** FYI Daily **11.50** Film: Out for Justice (1991) **12.35** Motorway Patrol **1.00** Tour de France Highlights **2.00** The Wine Show **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.30 New Girl **1.00** The Goldbergs **2.00** Film: Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (2009) **3.45** Rude(ish) Tube **4.00** Film: The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: The A-Team (2010) **11.25** Gogglebox **1.35** Rude Tube **3.25** The New Normal **4.05** Rude(ish) Tube

Film4
11.00 Lifeboat (1944) **1.00** Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events (2004) **3.05** Percy Jackson & the Lightning Thief (2010) **5.20** Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters (2013) **7.20** Airplane! (1980) **9.00** Bridesmaids (2011) **11.25** Magic Mike (2012) **1.40** The Squad (2011) **3.55** Close

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Toby Jones

The Secret Agent (BBC1, 9pm)
New series. Adaptation of Joseph Conrad's novel, starring Toby Jones as a shopkeeper in Victorian London who is secretly a spy monitoring anarchist groups for the Russian government, a double life is wife does not suspect. He is ordered by his superiors to arrange a bombing that will be blamed on the British government to crack down on them, and is forced to recruit his brother-in-law as an accomplice. With Vicky McClure, Ian Hart, Stephen Graham and Charlie Hamblett.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **1.45** Live Davis Cup Tennis. **5.15** Songs of Praise. **5.50** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **6.35** BBC News. **6.50** Regional Programme. **7.00** **Countryfile**. The team takes a look at Britain's meadows, and the wildlife and plants that thrive in them. Matt Baker gets a lesson in cutting hay from the national female scything champion, while Naomi Wilkinson meets an artist who paints meadow landscapes, visits an RSPB site set up to provide a habitat for birds and insects, and discovers how meadows are proving a popular site for burials. John Craven discovers the folklore behind the healing properties of meadow plants, and Tom Heap investigates the lack of affordable housing in rural areas. **8.00** **Fake or Fortune?** New series. Fiona Bruce and art expert Philip Mould investigate a portrait of a man wearing a black cravat painted in 1939, which the owner believes is an early work of Lucian Freud, from his time at the Central School of Art – even though Freud himself denied painting it. The team tries to uncover who the mysterious man in the painting was, whether it really was painted by Freud, and if so, why did he claim that it was not his work. The investigation digs up a complex history of feuds, rivalry and intrigue. **9.00** **The Secret Agent**. New series. Adaptation of Joseph Conrad's novel, starring Toby Jones as a shopkeeper in Victorian London who is secretly a spy monitoring anarchists for the Russian government. **10.00** BBC News. **10.20** Regional Programme. **10.30** **Olympic Imagine Special: One Night in 2012**. Alan Yentob looks back at the 2012 Olympics opening ceremony, with Danny Boyle and the creative team explaining the challenges that went into creating 'The Greatest Show on Earth'. **12.10** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.15** BBC News.

BBC2

6.30 Great British Garden Revival. (R) **7.30** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.00** The Beechgrove Garden. **8.30** **Countryfile**. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. (R) **11.00** Tom Kerridge's Best Ever Dishes. (R) **11.30** A Cook Abroad: Rick Stein's Australia. (R) **12.30** **Trilobite**. **1.45** Film: Kidnapped. (1960) Historical adventure, starring Peter Finch. **3.15** Kangaroo Dundee and Other Animals – Part 1: Natural World. (R) **4.15** Kangaroo Dundee and Other Animals – Part 2: Natural World. (R) **5.15** **Top Gear**. (R) **6.00** **Attenborough's Life That Glows**. David Attenborough explores the world of bioluminescence, the often spectacular natural light produced by creatures including glow-worms, fireflies and plankton, using specially designed cameras, some fitted to a new generation of deep-sea submersibles and robots to record instances in the very deep ocean. The programme shows a millipede glowing on the forest floor in California, the mesmerising flashing light patterns of the synchronously firefly, the spooky glow of a rare dragon fish and luminous earth worms in France. (R) **7.00** **Trust Me, I'm a Doctor – Summer Special**. Skin surgeon Gabriel Weston tests the effectiveness of protective sun creams and Michael Mosley investigates ways to get the benefits of exercise without doing any at all. (R) **8.00** **Golf: The Open Championship**. Hazel Irvine presents action from the fourth and final day of the prestigious event, which took place at Royal Troon Golf Club in Ayrshire. The battle for the Claret Jug could hardly have been closer at St Andrews last year, with two of the world's finest players in Jason Day and Jordan Spieth both finishing one stroke off the top of the leaderboard, while Zach Johnson, Marc Leishman and Louis Oosthuizen contested a four-hole play-off. It was Johnson who was to emerge victorious, adding the Major to the Masters title he won in 2007. **10.00** **Film: A Long Way Down**. (2014) Premiere. Comedy drama, with Pierce Brosnan and Toni Collette. **11.30** **Mock the Week**. (R) **12.00** **Film: In a Better World**. (2010) **1.55** Sign Zone: **Countryfile**. (R) **2.50** **Holby City**. (R) **3.50** This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.20** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.30** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Oddbods. (R) **7.35** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.00** **Teen Titans Go!** (R) **8.25** **ITV News**. **8.30** **Weekend**. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.20** Judge Rinder. (R) **12.20** **ITV News**: Weather. **12.25** Rebound. (R) **1.25** Long Lost Family. (R) **2.25** Love Your Garden. (R) **3.30** **Midsomer Murders**. (R) **5.30** **Masterpiece** with Alan Titchmarsh. (R) **6.30** **Regional Programme**: Weather. **7.00** **The Chase: Celebrity Special**. Former Dancing on Ice judge Karen Barber, TV presenter Dick Strawbridge, Coronation Street's Catherine Tidy (Eva Price) and comedian Russell Kane compete to win thousands of pounds for charity by pitting their general knowledge against one of the show's resident trivia experts. However, they must work as a team to build their prize pot and stay one step ahead of the Chaser. Bradley Walsh hosts. (R) **8.00** **It'll Be Alright on the Night**. Griff Rhys Jones presents another selection of outtakes from popular TV series, featuring stars including Mary Berry, Paul O'Grady and Ant & Dec, as well as Ian McKellen and Derek Jacobi experiencing some memorable mishaps on the set of *Victorious*. (R) **9.00** **Film: Casino Royale**. (2006) James Bond achieves his '00' status and is dispatched on the trail of Le Chiffre, an international criminal financing terrorist organisations around the world. Bond's investigation leads to a casino in Montenegro, where he takes part in a high-stakes poker game in a bid to bankrupt Le Chiffre and put an end to his plans. Spy thriller, directed by Martin Campbell and starring Daniel Craig in his first outing as 007, with Eva Green, Mads Mikkelsen, Judi Dench and Giancarlo Giannini. **10.30** **ITV News**: Weather. **10.45** **Film: Casino Royale**. (2006) Concluded. **12.05** **River Monsters**. (R) **12.30** **Jackpot247**. Interactive gaming. **3.00** **Motorsport UK**. **3.50** **British Superbike Championship Highlights**. **4.45** **ITV Nightscreen**. **5.05** **The Jeremy Kyle Show**. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Shipping Wars. (R) **6.25** Shipping Wars. (R) **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** The King of Queens. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Dare to Believe: Jordanne Whitley. (R) **12.35** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **1.35** Film: Hairspray. (2007) Musical comedy, starring Nikki Blonsky and John Travolta. **3.50** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.50** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. **5.50** Dare to Believe: Jordanne Whitley. (R) **5.55** Channel 4 News. **6.15** **Film: The Lion King**. (1994) A lion prince blames himself for his father's death and flees into the wilderness, leaving his wicked uncle to take over. As the cub grows to adulthood, he receives a vision of the dead king, who inspires him to seek revenge and reclaim his rightful throne. Disney animated musical, with the voices of Matthew Broderick, Jeremy Irons, Rowan Atkinson, Whoopi Goldberg and James Earl Jones. **8.00** **Film: Thor**. (2011) Premiere. The Norse god of thunder is banished from his own world when his arrogance puts the kingdom on the brink of war. He is sent to present-day Earth, where he is forced to live among humans without his supernatural powers, but must regain his abilities to defend his new home against his evil brother. Kenneth Branagh's fantasy adventure based on the Marvel comics, starring Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman, Tom Hiddleston and Anthony Hopkins. Edited for violence. **10.15** **Film: Dredd**. (2012) A law enforcer in a post-apocalyptic city must fight his way out of a tower block dominated by a ruthless crime lord. Sci-fi thriller, starring Karl Urban and Lena Headey. **12.05** Dare to Believe: Jack Rutter. (R) **12.10** Rich Brother. Poor Brother. Cutting Edge. Documentary exploring the wealth gap in Britain. (R) **1.05** Date My Mum. Children choose prospective partners for their mothers. (R) **2.05** Dogs: Their Secret Lives. The results of the online survey launched in the series. (R) **3.00** Posh Pawn. James heads to Lanzarote to tackle the sale of a yellow submarine. (R) **3.55** French Collection. (R) **4.50** Dare to Believe: Ali Javad. (R) **4.55** Fifteen to One. (R) **5.50** Draw It! (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **6.15** Angelina Ballerina: The Next Steps. (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.40** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.50** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.05** Pets. (R) **7.10** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **7.20** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.35** Little Princess. (R) **7.45** Pip Ahoy! (R) **8.00** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.30** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.45** Shimmer and Shine. **9.10** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Now That's Funny! (R) **11.25** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud 3. (R) **12.25** Film: Innerspace. (1987) Sci-fi comedy, starring Dennis Quaid. **2.40** Film: Three Men and a Cradle. (1987) Comedy starring Tom Selleck, Ted Danson and Steve Guttenberg. **4.35** Film: Willow. (1988) Fantasy adventure, starring Warwick Davis. **7.00** **Cricket** on 5. England v Pakistan. Mark Nicholas presents action from the fourth day of the First Test in the four-match series, which took place at Lord's. With commentary by Geoffrey Boycott, Michael Vaughan and Simon Hughes. **8.00** **Now That's Funny!** Featuring videos of people trying to stay calm under pressure, including two brothers who trick their sister into thinking they are under attack from zombies, and a bad-tempered father trying to solve a riddle. **8.55** 5 News Weekend. **9.00** **Big Brother**. Daily round-up of highlights, revealing how the housemates are getting on under the all-seeing eye of Big Brother, featuring the latest tasks, games, arguments, laughs, diary-room visits and bedroom chit-chat. **10.00** **20 Moments that Rocked the 80s**. Cherie Lunghi presents a countdown of memorable moments, including royal weddings, political scandals, sporting triumphs and the rise to fame of iconic entertainers. (R) **11.30** **The 80s: The Best of Bad TV**. A look back at memorable TV highlights from the 1980s, focusing on the best and worst that the decade had to offer, including the infamous 1989 Brit Awards. (R) **12.50** Lip Sync Battle. (R) **1.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** GP's: Behind Closed Doors. (R) **4.00** Now That's Funny! (R) **4.50** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Concerto at the BBC Proms **7.30** BBC Proms 2016: Fauré Requiem **9.40** Britain's Wild Places **10.00** K2: The Killer Summit: Storyville **11.25** Timeshift: Of Ice and Men **12.25** Rich Hall's You Can Go to Hell, I'm Going to Texas **1.55** Horizon: Who's Afraid of a Big Black Hole? **2.55** Bullseyes and Beer – When Darts Hit Britain: Timeshift **3.55** Close **ITV2**
12.25 Take Me Out **1.35** The Cube: Celebrity Special **2.35** Catchphrase **3.35** Film: The Flintstones (1994) **4.35** FYI Daily **4.40** Film: The Flintstones (1994) **5.20** Film: Nanny McPhee (2005) **6.20** FYI Daily **6.25** Film: Nanny McPhee (2005) **7.15** Film: Liar Liar (1997) **8.15** FYI Daily **8.20** Film: Liar Liar (1997) **9.00** Love Island: Heading Home **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.30** The Cleveland Show **1.30** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **1.55** Planet's Funniest Animals **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV3 Nightscreen **ITV3**
2.20 Wyclef **3.30** The Zoo **4.40** Film: The Belles of St Trinian's (1954) **5.30** FYI Daily **5.35** Film: The Belles of St Trinian's (1954) **6.25** Rosemary & Thyme **8.00** Midsomer Murders **10.00** Lewis **12.00** Wire in the Blood **2.05** A Touch of Frost **3.45** May the Best House Win **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen **ITV4**
11.00 Tour de France Highlights **12.00** Tour de France Live. Coverage of stage 15 of this year's race. **5.00** Storage Wars **5.55** The Wine Show **7.00** Tour de France Highlights **8.00** River Monsters **9.00** Film: Tin Cup (1996) **10.10** FYI Daily **10.15** Film: Tin Cup (1996) **11.45** Film: The Client (1994) **12.50** FYI Daily **12.55** Film: The Client (1994) **2.05** Tour de France Highlights **3.00** Teleshopping **E4**
2.00 Brooklyn Nine-Nine **3.00** The Big Bang Theory **5.00** Rude (ish) Tube Shorts **5.10** Film: Independence Day (1996) **8.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Tattoo Fixers **12.10** Rich Kids of Instagram **1.15** Containment 2 **1.20** Gogglebox **3.05** 2 Broke Girls **3.45** Hollyoaks **Film4**
11.00 The Bedford Incident (1965) **1.00** Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs (2009) **2.50** Ice Age: Continental Drift (2012) **4.35** Imagine That (2009) **6.55** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) **9.00** Identity Thief (2013) **11.15** Mindscape (2013) **1.10** Like Someone in Love (2012) **3.30** Close



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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Kidnapping Lizzie: Nightmare Visions, Channel 5, 3.15pm
When 15-year-old Lizzie is kidnapped, a psychic comes forward claiming to know the teenager's whereabouts, but it soon becomes clear she has an agenda of her own. Thriller, starring Nadia Bjorlin, Richard Ruccolo and Vanessa Evigan. (2016)

TUESDAY

Dark Secrets, Channel 5, 3.10pm
A young woman becomes increasingly suspicious of the motives of her older room-mate. Thriller, starring Boti Bliss, Ashley Leggat and William R Moses. (2011)

WEDNESDAY

Sanctum, Channel 4, 1.30am
A team of divers exploring a system of undersea caves becomes trapped and must find a way through the caverns to the surface. Thriller, starring Richard Roxburgh and Ioan Gruffudd. (2011)

THURSDAY

Columbo: The Bye-Bye Sky-High IQ Murder Case, ITV, 11.40pm
One of the world's cleverest men plots the perfect murder, but must pit his wits against Columbo's equally sharp mind. Crime drama, with Peter Falk and Theodore Bikel. (1977)



Wanderlust, Friday, Channel 4, 12.10am

FRIDAY

Total Recall, ITV, 10.40pm
A construction worker pays to have fake memories of a dream holiday implanted into his brain, but discovers his mind has already been tampered with – apparently to erase his true identity as a secret agent from a colony on Mars. Paul Verhoeven's sci-fi thriller, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Michael Ironside. (1990)

Wanderlust, Channel 4, 12.10am

A Manhattan resident loses his job, so he and his wife leave the city in search of a fresh start. During their journey, they stumble on a commune of hippies and decide to join until they have decided what to do with their lives. Comedy, starring Jennifer Aniston, Paul Rudd and Alan Alda. (2012)

New Zealand's weird and wonderful creatures

New Zealand's breathtaking scenery and landscapes have been used as the setting for various big-budget films over recent years, including Wolverine, The World's Fastest Indian, The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe, Whale Rider, The Piano and, of course, Peter Jackson's The Lord of the Rings and Hobbit sagas.

New Zealand brought all of those and other acclaimed films to life, and you even could say the country has become a silent movie star in its own right.

Isolated from the rest of the world since the time of the dinosaurs, the Land of the Long White Cloud has been left to its own devices for 80 million years, with an array of surprising and spectacular consequences.

And when you want a man to guide you through a landscape and wildlife that have been left untouched since prehistoric times, who better than Mr Jurassic Park himself, Sam Neill

Despite being born in Northern Ireland, Neill moved back to New Zealand when he was seven.

He is now rightly considered as one of the country's greatest actors, and earlier this year he starred in another New Zealand-made film, Hunt for the Wilderpeople, the adventure comedy-drama written and directed by Taika Waititi.

Narrator Neill brings an extra level of gravitas to this breathtaking three-part wildlife series which transports viewers to an exotic and mysterious island chain, and reveals how the country's rich, intriguing wildlife manages to survive.

The first episode features some of New Zealand's most ancient and weirdest of species, and brings to life the story of how their spectacular home was formed. Dinosaur-like reptiles still prowl here, while insects have become giants, birds lose the power of flight and behave like badgers, and the people who settled here have also developed their own unique culture.

Across New Zealand life battles the natural forces – which shaped its past and continue to drive life there today. One of the most geologically active countries on earth, it's a beautiful but dangerous place to live, regularly rocked by earthquakes, volcanic activity and a wild and wet climate.

This episode reveals some unexpected and spectacular solutions wildlife have adopted to survive. Bustling penguin cities thrive in dwarf rainforests and strangler trees crack dry lava fields turning volcanic wasteland into an oasis full of life.

Plus, there is footage of shepherds and their sheepdogs flying across vast mountainous landscapes in helicopters, and an insight into how dolphins have developed their own leaping body language.

On these mythical islands, the astonishing creatures and resilient people have risen to the challenges of their dramatic and demanding home, and the resulting sights and sounds are truly astonishing.



New Zealand: Earth's Mythical Islands, Tuesday, BBC2, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Eden Channel 4, 9pm
New series. Reality programme filmed over the course of a year in which 23 men and women try to build a new life and new society from scratch in a remote location in the Highlands, with participants including a doctor, a vet, a chef, a carpenter and a shepherdess. In the opening edition, they tackle the start of their 365-day experience as they open the gates into the 600 acres of land they'll be calling home for the next 12 months.

The Somme 1916 – From Both Sides of the Wire BBC2, 9pm

While some channels may be obsessed with ratings-grabbing shows, it's good to know that the Beeb are always on hand to uphold Lord Reith's simple philosophy: inform, educate, entertain. And when it comes to informing and educating on one of the bloodiest conflicts of the 20th century, this new series does a good job. Peter Barton is our guide, and he will be examining events of the First World War battle from German and British perspectives. While much of the received wisdom may tell us one thing, Barton reveals a story that gives us a fresh take on those horrific events of 100 years ago when 420,000 Britons alone lost their lives.

TUESDAY

The Job Interview Channel 4, 9pm
Blacks Vets bosses Tracey and Val from Dudley interview for a receptionist, with 24-year-old David, who has struggled to find a job and support his family, among the applicants. Others up for consideration include 41-year-old animal lover Nicola, who owns 150 quails, and 27-year-old Emily who wants a better life/work balance after quitting teaching. Also interviewing are Lee and Karen from Colossal Training, who run maritime health and safety courses, looking for a super-organised admin officer for their new branch in Liverpool.

WEDNESDAY

Boy Meets Girl Channel 4, 10pm
Leo gets a job as a dispatch driver and meets his match in his new prankster-loving boss. Meanwhile, Pam invites Peggy over for dinner now that they are 'virtually in-laws', with the catering to be provided by Tony's cafe. Anji presents James with some life-changing news, and Charlie gets thrown out of his lodgings, leading to Pam offering him Leo's room.

Man Down Channel 4, 10pm

Even if you ignore his height, Greg Davies has done a fine job of eclipsing fellow chat show guests on series such as The Graham Norton Show and Top Gear. Whether plugging his series Taskmaster or the third run of this rib-tickling sitcom, he's proved comedy gold over the past few months. This week, Dan (Davies) meets his replacement in the classroom, Miss Clarke (Isy Suttie), and the pupils don't take his departure the way he hopes. He's also dazzled by a trendy priest (Phil Nichol), and is welcomed into the church club, where he soon makes an impression. Meanwhile, Jo (Róisín Conaty) pitches her new shop 'idea' to the town council, and 'Daddy' (Tony Robinson) continues to charm mum (Gwyneth Powell) and Nesta (Stephanie Cole).



Man Down, Wednesday, Channel 4, 10pm

THURSDAY

New Blood BBC1, 9pm
Rash and Stefan vow to prove the innocence of Leila, who recalls that charity boss Lisa had the opportunity to tamper with the dosage that killed her accountant. Stefan discovers the victim once worked for Malik and had recently visited him - but when Malik won't talk, the pair follow Lisa to the hotel of a high-ranking African politician David Kumalah, where they find more than they expected. Meanwhile, Alison has a breakthrough while searching the charity's accounts – but will it be too little too late? Last in the series.

FRIDAY
Celebrity First Dates Channel 4, 9pm

Four more celebrities go in search of romance with members of the public. Brad Simpson, lead singer of boy band the Vamps, meets an 18-year-old fan, while Atomic Kitten's Natasha Hamilton goes on her first date since splitting up with fellow pop star Ritchie Neville. Bernie Clifton, mainstay of 1970s and 1980s TV with his ostrich puppet, has an encounter with an 80something bellydancer, while rugby league player Kegan Hirst gets an introduction to the gay dating scene from a fitness adviser.

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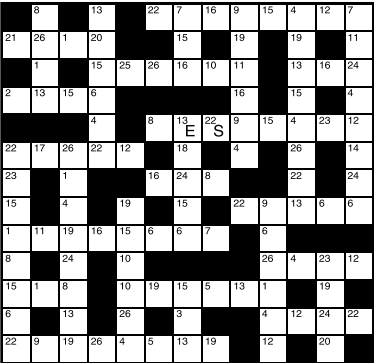
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Express & Star

BRAIN GYM No.386

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

J	F	K	U	I	B	X	G	A	R	Y	P	O
N	Q	M	C	Z	E	D	L	H	W	V	S	T

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

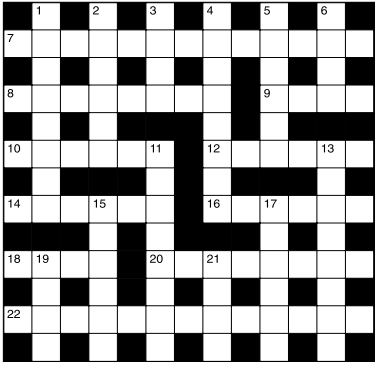
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- 7. Far too colourless to be accepted in society? (6,3,4)
- 8. The point of punctuation (4,4)
- 9. Stick around a street (4)
- 10. Soldier with papers in order (6)
- 12. Poles strangely following a certain inclination (6)
- 14. Dances arranged to scale (6)
- 16. New depots he controls, absolutely (6)
- 18. Where needles are kept, just in case! (4)
- 20. Regarded as having taken no active part (6,2)
- 22. I can't sing if in distress - though trivial (13)

Down

- 1. No answers? (8)
- 2. Appear on the scene and defy gravity? (4,2)
- 3. An entrance I'd turn in at (4)
- 4. The control of the stock-holder? (4-4)
- 5. It goes round without joining up (6)
- 6. Turn pale - being possibly guilty (4)
- 11. Having associations for a Communist who had nothing on loan (8)
- 13. Offer for money? (8)
- 15. Bring out in a felicitous way (6)
- 17. Draw South by boat (6)
- 19. It's a sound quality (4)
- 21. Fools break up the sofa (4)



Quick Clues:

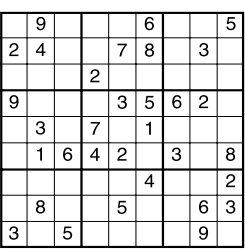
Across

- 7. Not showy (13)
- 8. Important (8)
- 9. Row (4)
- 10. Concurred (6)
- 12. Elf (6)
- 14. Mason's tool (6)
- 16. Gloomy (6)
- 18. Fairy (4)
- 20. Speed (8)
- 22. Scarce (2,5,6)

Down

- 1. Imperil (8)
- 2. Span (6)
- 3. Stupefy (4)
- 4. Fenced in (8)
- 5. Sour (6)
- 6. Remedy (4)
- 11. Distribution (8)
- 13. Strangle (8)
- 15. Heaviness (6)
- 17. Get free (6)
- 19. Sea-eagle (4)
- 21. Endure (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

3	5	4	7	9	1	2	8	6
1	6	8	4	3	2	5	7	9
7	2	9	8	5	6	4	3	1
6	1	7	2	4	5	8	9	3
4	9	2	1	6	3	8	5	7
8	3	5	6	7	9	1	4	2
9	7	6	5	2	8	3	1	4
2	4	3	9	1	4	7	6	5
5	4	1	3	6	7	9	2	8

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Stop; 8 Above board; 9 Bigger; 10 Visa; 12 Tremor; 14 Direct; 15 Feudal; 17 Queens; 18 Asti; 19 Twilight; 21 Silhouette; 22 Made. Down: 2 Take orders; 3 Pate; 4 Lotter; 5 Feared; 6 Converse; 7 Idea; 11 Second-hand; 13 Midnight; 16 Let out; 17 Quits; 18 Also; 20 Item. QUICK - Across: 1 Path; 8 Outlandish; 9 Alienate; 10 Arid; 12 Barren; 14 Trench; 15 Vanish; 17 Hither; 18 Tell; 19 Narcotic; 21 Correspond; 22 Step. Down: 2 Amalgamate; 3 Hose; 4 Strain; 5 Patent; 6 Adjacent; 7 Shed; 11 Incredible; 13 Rallier; 16 Honest; 17 Harrow; 18 Tack; 20 Odds

Quiz

- 1. Which Gestapo chief did Carlos the Jackal's lawyer Jacques Vergès also defend?
- 2. Which Far East capital was known as Batavia until 1949?
- 3. What do the initials QED stand for?
- 4. Which perennial plant is also called Lady's Smock?
- 5. Which satellite relayed the first live TV transmission between the USA and Europe?
- 6. Of what nationality is the novelist and politician Mario Vargas Llosa?
- 7. To which king did Parliament present the Nineteen Propositions?
- 8. Of which metal is galena the chief ore?
- 9. What is the capital of West Bengal state?
- 10. Which inflammation is also called muscular rheumatism?

Last week's solutions:

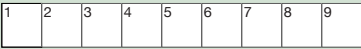
- Quiz: 1 Feldspars or felspars; 2 Nick Berry; 3 Charles; 4 Canada; 5 China; 6 Chess; 7 Phil Babb; 8 Language and literature; 9 Jean-Philippe Rameau; 10 Rowing.

Niner: REVULSION

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

- 435 gives an animal,
- 739675 gives a cruel man,
- 162358 gives a robber.



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THE SELF CATERING OPTION
Bath Mill Lodge Retreat, Bath
DRAWING the blinds one morning, my heart skips a beat as a figure runs from the window to the back of our lodge.

I creep towards the back bedroom, peek, and there, staring back at me, is a pair of big Bambi eyes, belonging to one of the many deer easily spotted at Bath Mill Lodge Retreat.

It's a great spot for families, made up of 63 five-star self-catering lodges, set in an Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty since 2015, just three miles away from the grand city of Bath. The modern chalets sleep between two and eight people and have a contemporary interior, from the open-plan living space through to the furnishings and fabrics. There's a fully kitted out kitchen,

By Claire Spreadbury

TV with new movies available to download and multiple bathrooms. Whatever the weather, there are plenty of fun days out for all the clan close by, from the local history of the Roman Baths (there's a kids' audio tour and worksheets to fill in – my two girls loved hearing about the 'old days' and sniffing in the smelly hot baths!) to the beautiful Cheddar Gorge and Longleat Safari Park.

There are also pretty country trails, leisurely canal walks, giant stately homes and gardens to explore. And on those days where you'd rather take it easy, there are woodland walks and cycle paths surrounding Bath Mill Lodge.

If you don't feel like cooking, there's a restaurant and bar, housed in the 350-year-old Mill House, offering great service and making an extra fuss over little ones.

* Lodges sleep up to eight people and prices start from £242 for a three-night stay (off peak) in studio accommodation sleeping two people. Visit www.darwinescapes.co.uk

THE HOTEL BREAK
Ickworth Hotel, Suffolk

I can't remember the last time I felt my blood pressure rising because of the amount of physical effort needed to ride a bike uphill. I'm climbing a hill in the trails surrounding Ickworth House and Hotel.

We arrived as four but right now, me and my other half are taking in some of the gorgeous greenery amid the 1,800 acres of National Trust grounds, on mountain bikes we've borrowed from the hotel free of charge. Our two little terrors, meanwhile, are getting creative in kids' club Four Bears Den – also free for two hours every day. Kids and adults are thought of

pretty equally here. Grown-ups can enjoy formal fine dining at Frederick's, safe in the knowledge little ones are being looked after.

Children, meanwhile, get to have 'high tea' at 5pm in the cinema room, followed by a film. Creche staff are also on hand, meaning it's relaxing for parents too.

Although grand there's a relaxed atmosphere, a delight for anyone with children. Rooms are furnished with board games, and DVDs are available to borrow any time. And for super-sized fun, head down to the games room. Ensuring time out for parents and oodles of entertainment for kids of all ages, The Ickworth has family escapes perfectly framed.

* Rooms start from £120. There are mid-week summer special offers on, including a two-night stay, with dinner, bed and breakfast, from £329. Visit www.luxuryfamilyhotels.co.uk or call 0844 482 2152.

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London is the natural home of theatre and the musical is king in the capital's world-famous West End. British musicals that prove a runaway success here, often go on to triumph on Broadway and around the globe. The winning combination of engaging writing, captivating stage design and commanding performance has enabled London theatres to achieve box office smashes time and time again.

Omega Holidays offer a superb portfolio of theatre breaks, managing the whole show package which includes travel, either by coach or rail, four-star accommodation and various price bands for each show. Make your own way breaks are also available to book.

Rail inclusive breaks – Two days

Saturday Night Theatre from £169.⁹⁵

Catch the Theatre Express and enjoy a super two-day weekend break in the capital.

There's a selection of London hotels to choose from (supplements may apply) and rail travel is standard class with the option to upgrade. Departs Saturday from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton, returning on the Sunday.

The ticket is for a Saturday evening performance.

Rail inclusive breaks – Three days

Theatre Showstopper from £239.⁹⁵

This popular theatre package to the West End departs from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton on the Friday returning on Sunday.

Standard class travel is included with the option to upgrade, plus two nights stay at a four-star London hotel (supplements may apply).

Includes a top priced ticket for a Friday evening performance.

Coach inclusive breaks – Two days

Saturday Night from £149.⁹⁵

Theatre Weekend with Dinner from £159.⁹⁵

For the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option, see the matinee performance before heading to the hotel for an evening meal. The Saturday Night option includes a ticket for the evening performance (meal not included).

Both breaks include a standard priced theatre ticket and the option to upgrade plus an overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel.



DAYS: 2 OR 3 DEPARTS: VARIOUS DATES

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782)



Seven-bedroom home is stylish and impressive

Extremely well presented and particularly stylish, 17 High Park Crescent, Sedgley, lies in an ever popular area within walking distance of the town centre.

An impressive and substantial residence, it is for sale through Skitts at £450,000 with no chain.

It has around 2,700sq.ft of seven bedroom living accommodation, four bathrooms, three reception rooms, a 20ft breakfast kitchen, detached double garage (having potential to convert to separate living accommodation - subject to planning permission), private rear garden, off road parking and stunning panoramic views to the rear.

With gas central heating and double glazing, in more detail, it has a briquette driveway providing parking for numerous vehicles past a lawned fore-garden. Steps past a further lawn area leading to the entrance porch. The entrance hall has laminate flooring, a storage cupboard, stairs off and a W.C. The three reception rooms include a ground floor dining room, a ground floor sitting room with laminate flooring and patio doors leading to the rear. The kitchen has patio doors leading out to the rear garden.

Off the first floor landing is stairs to the second floor, a WC, a living room with a pebble effect gas fire, laminate flooring and patio doors to a Juliette balcony. Bedroom two has built-in wardrobes with mirror fronted sliding doors and an en-suite shower room with ceramic wall tiling. Bedroom five has laminate flooring and bedroom seven is also on this floor.

Off the second floor landing is the master bedroom with a walk-in wardrobe and an en-suite shower room with ceramic wall and floor tiling.

Bedroom three has built-in wardrobes with mirror fronted sliding doors and an en-suite shower room with ceramic wall and floor tiling.

Bedroom six has a built-in wardrobe with mirror fitted sliding doors. Bedroom four is also to be found on this level.

The rear garden has a gravel area, patio area, a neat lawn, two side gates and a shed.

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Panoramic views



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Walled gardens and taste of the country star in barn conversion

STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN
£549,950 <<<

Lincomb Barn, situated in Stourport-on-Severn, is an impressive detached barn conversion for sale with estate agent Walton and Hipkiss.

The beautifully presented property is on the market for £549,950.

The impressive detached barn conversion has a wealth of period features and is beautifully presented throughout, offering spacious accommodation, detached garage with substantial office space and enjoys delightful walled gardens.

The property enjoys rural living being surrounded by Worcestershire countryside. It is situated on a quiet lane in the heart of the rural and popular hamlet of Lincomb. It is approached via double wooden gates and a paved driveway which provides parking and access.

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Full of charm and character, the property's split-level accommodation has the living space including a lounge, kitchen, shower room and a reception room on the first floor and has four further bedrooms downstairs.

There are well laid out and low maintenance gardens to the rear and stretching to the side of the property. It also has a balcony overlooking the garden.

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Simply Superb estate is a spectacular package

By John Griffiths

SKODA'S new Superb Estate is a big car – and it needs to be just to carry off its impressive array of awards just a few months after its launch.

With prices from under £20,000 its combination of comfort, low running costs and sheer space set the standard in its class, and indeed leave manufacturers of cars at twice the price somewhat red-faced.

It isn't only the critics and fleet managers who are impressed by the Superb: while overall sales are still overshadowed by the enduringly popular Fabia and Octavia, the Skoda flagship's figures are up by a staggering 80 per cent.

Space is the Superb's forte. The rear seats easily accommodate three adults and with an impressive 157mm of rear leg room there's little to compare outside the world of stretched limos. Then there's the estate's 595 litres of cargo space – stretching to 1,950 litres with the rear seats folded.

While it sits on the same platform as the Superb hatch, the estate is actually 47mm wider, too, for even more shoulder room.

The wheelbase is stretched by 80mm, so that the estate – which shares the same sculpted lines as the hatchback – looks long, low and purposeful, with minimal overhangs. It helps to make best use of interior space and improves the larger car's handling characteristics. The styling works so well it almost belies the sheer practicality of this serious load-lugger.

The test car rejoiced in the rather unwieldy name of SEL Executive Greenline trim, which basically means that at £26,715 it comes with a high specification but its

It even has the canine vote – specially adapted versions are now being used as police dog carriers

accent is nevertheless firmly on fuel and tax efficiency. Powered by a 1.6 litre, 120PS turbo diesel it claims an average economy figure of 76.4mpg and a tax-busting 95g/km of CO2 emissions – so no VED and low benefit-in-kind rating. That figure is, for a car of this size, pretty staggering: around 60mpg is probably a little more realistic in real-world driving, but it's still impressive.

Its 0 to 62mph time is 11.1 seconds but that may be a little misleading: after all, who buys a big estate to take part in the traffic lights grand prix. What is more important is that the 250Nm of torque from just 1,600rpm, provides plenty of pulling power from low speeds, flexibility through the gears and flowing, relaxed progress.

Driving is effortless, and the estate never feels its true size as you thread your way along winding rural roads.

There are other engine options, of course, including turbocharged petrol units producing from 125 to a whopping 280PS (the latter reserved for the all-wheel drive Superb variant). There also 2.0 litre diesel options, with power outputs from 150 to 190PS. Some of those offer more rapid acceleration, but none match the 1.6TDI

Greenline's economy figures, zero road tax and lowest (19 per cent) company car tax, which may make it the top choice for fleets.

The test car's equipment list is a long one, with 17-inch alloys, seven airbags, dual zone climate control, electric windows and door mirrors, and electrically powered tailgate, rear parking sensors, headlamp washers and an eight-inch colour touchscreen for the satnav, audio and connectivity systems.

It also comes with adaptive cruise control, a radar-based system which helps to keep you a safe distance from the car in front: when traffic slows, so do you, and when it moves freely again you accelerate to your chosen setting. If you're not using it, for example around town, there's a front assist system with emergency braking to prevent rear-end shunts.

There is also a full range of electronic safety systems, from stability and traction programmes to hill hold assist and cornering brake control.

The top specification, most powerful and four wheel drive Superb Estate costs almost £36,000 which may sound expensive but in comparative terms it still has the competition beaten. But at entry level, for £19,840 (£800 more than the equivalent hatchback) the estate's combination of space, comfort and practicality offer great value for money: you could pay more for a modest family hatchback. The Greenline costs more but promises considerably reduced running costs in tax and fuel.

Given its qualities it comes as no surprise that the car has already won numerous best estate and car of the year titles. It even has the canine vote – specially adapted versions are now being used as police dog carriers.



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Added kudos for XC90

By Matt Joy

Volvo's XC90 has been around for a little over a year, but in that time, it's already secured a stack of awards and is proving hugely popular with buyers too. It mixes sensible design with attractive looks and is even more spacious and practical than the old car.

But now the crowing glory of the XC90 range has arrived in the shape of the T8 model. Combining a 2.0-litre petrol engine that is both turbocharged and supercharged, with an electric motor and battery pack makes the T8 a plug-in hybrid, and one that has the potential to deliver some impressive performance and economy figures.

Only the keenest of eyes will be able to distinguish the T8 from its conventional siblings. Chiefly, it is the discreet badges front and rear that are the most obvious changes, but also the additional filler flap on the front wing which gives access to the charging connections. This car then doesn't make a fuss about its capabilities; it is as discreetly handsome as all the other XC90s you can buy.

That's no doubt part of the reason why it holds so much kerb appeal.

Where much of the competition has decided that bold or even brash is the way to design a large SUV, the more subtle Volvo approach is welcome.

It's not just a pretty face however, as the XC90 is even more of a family wagon than before. Up front there's acres of space,

even with the wide transmission tunnel, the second row is comfortable and spacious too while the third row is one of the more useful in the class and is easy to access too. The boot is useful in seven-seat mode and huge in five-seat configuration, and plumping for the air suspension means you can raise and lower the rear end for easier loading.

Once installed in that attractive cabin, there's little to tell you that the XC90 T8 has a significantly different powertrain. It has four modes to marshal what's available; hybrid, where the car sorts out the best use of energy for itself, pure which uses electric only, power mode where both petrol engine and electric motor work at the same time to give four-wheel-drive and finally save mode, where the battery's charge is maintained until you choose to use it.

Seamlessly

In hybrid mode, the petrol engine is dormant at low speeds and while the battery is charged, but should you prod the accelerator hard enough, it chimes in seamlessly. As with a regular hybrid you can add charge back into the battery by careful use of the brakes, helping it to reach the claimed electric-only range of 27 miles.

On the flip side, in power mode the T8 is something of subtle rocket ship. There's 401bhp available with both engine and motor combined, enough to propel it to 62mph from rest in only 5.6 seconds. Using it this way means higher fuel consumption of course, but the official NEDC combined figure of 134.5mpg and 49g/km of CO2 means it qualifies for the Government grant.

There's no doubt the T8 is a relatively expensive car – £60,455 in Momentum guise as tested here – but if it suits the way you



.....
If you have almost any combination of kids and adults, the XC90 T8 can cope with it
.....

need to use your car, it also has the potential to be very cheap to run.

The specification is also quite lavish; satellite navigation on the large 9-inch touchscreen, powered leather seats, aluminium trim, 19-inch alloy wheels and a power tailgate to name just a few.

If you have almost any combination of kids and adults, the XC90 T8 can cope with it, making it a superb family vehicle. On the other hand, if you have to commute into a

city, having that saved electric mode is a handy bonus, especially as you can relax in the sumptuous cabin while you do it. It's a luxury car for sure, but one that justifies the expense.

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ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991
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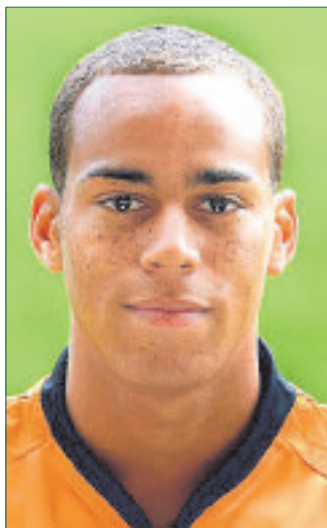


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Elliott Bennett played for Wolves first team



Ashley Vincent – a Les Green 'spot'



Liam McAlinden was picked up by Wolves



Lee Collins – another of Green's gems



Green found Nathaniel Mendez-Laing



Les Green with shirts on his stairs from some of the players he 'found'

Marathon man who ran up years as Wolves scout

THERE will be plenty of young starlets keen to catch the eye when the football season swings back into action – but one of the best talent-spotters in the area won't be there to cast an eye over the hopefuls.

After 23 years trekking up and down touchlines around the Midlands, 77-year-old super scout Les Green has finally decided to hang up his boots.

Green was a familiar face around the school and park pitches across the region, charged with the task of unearthing a few gems for Wolves.

And having spotted Danny Batth, Mark Davies, Elliott Bennett, Nathaniel Mendez-Laing and Liam McAlinden – and seen them all go on to play for the Molineux men's first team, he quickly became one of the most respected scouts in the area.

He also discovered Joleon Lescott, who went on to play for England and claim Premier League honour with Manchester City.

Respect

Another nine of Green's 'finds', Ashley Vincent, Matthew Barnes-Homer, Amari Morgan-Smith, Chris Cornes, Jordan Fitzpatrick, Lee Collins, Kyle Bennett, Myles Storey and Josh Craddock all went on to play for professional clubs after leaving Wolves.

"I have had the time of my life," said Green, who was born in Ilford, Essex and picked up the Wolves bug after first watching them at Charlton in 1949.

"When people that have been in the game all their lives respect a goalkeeper that played in Division Six of the Wolverhampton Sunday League for Claregate United on the racecourse at Dunstall, that's a hell of a step.

"When they respect your opinion because you have had success in the past, that's very rewarding."

SPORTING FEATURE

By Nick Elwell

"The ones that get signed are the ones with the strong mentality. They want to win and are competitive."

Green's obsession with Wolves began as a youngster and eventually saw him move to the area in 1967.

"I am from Ilford but I became a Wolves fan at 11 much to my father's disgust, he was a West Ham fan," he said. "My dad took me to see them play Charlton in 1949 and that was it, I was hooked.

"I used to have The Pink (Sporting Star) and I used to come up and watch when I could afford it.

"I moved up here in 67. I got a transfer through the company I worked for, the Post Office Telephones which is now BT.

"I was able to buy a house in Wolverhampton which I could never have done in Ilford. I was next to my football club. It was the football club that brought me up here.

"The people in London that I worked with thought I was stark raving mad. When I came up here it was during the time of Enoch Powell's Rivers of Blood speech. Wolverhampton's image was just about rock bottom. They thought I was going to the depths of hell but in fact I was going to Bilbrook."

Green's opportunity to work with Wolves came via a chance meeting with legendary Midlands scout Ron Jukes who was working for the club.

"When I worked at BT I got myself pretty well-

known, I became a manager within the structure. Alan Parsons, who worked on the sales side, was manager of Boldmere St Michaels," he said. "I used to go around the non-league games and Alan introduced me to Ron. We got talking and he said 'do you get around much?'."

"I said I like to get round non-league grounds and he gave me his card and said 'if you see anything let me know'.

"Things went from there and I joined as a school-boy scout in the centre of excellence, that was 23 years ago.

"Tony Painter, who was Ron's assistant, would ring me on a Friday and say, 'can you go and watch Cannock schools play or Wolverhampton schools?'."

Mentality

"I would go and then put a report in on any players that I saw. Something I discovered at the start, is that the ones that get signed are the ones with the strong mentality, the desire, pushy if you like," added Green. "They want to win and are competitive."

Green said his love affair with the old gold and black would continue. He and his second wife Jill and the youngest of his 14 grandchildren, Sam, are season ticket holders.

And, despite calling time on his scouting exploits the 77-year-old is certainly not running out of steam. Ending his association with Wolves means he can devote more time to his other love, running.

The globe-trotting runner will continue to step out for Cannock and Stafford Athletics Club and hopes to add to the 47 marathons he has run.

"I ran a 10k for GB Masters in Portugal recently and that was about the 20th country I have raced in," he said. "I have done 47 marathons. I have done Paris, Rome, New York, Boston, London, Athens. I have also done the Himalayan 100-mile. I did the four-day 100k in Sahara desert and four years ago I did the polar circle marathon in Greenland."

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Title fight is on cards for 'Dangerous'

HALESOWEN'S Lennox Clarke saw off his opponent in the first round as he topped the bill at Walsall Town Hall. A title fight could now await the super middleweight.

Just 38 seconds were left of the opener as 'Dangerous' wiped out Dean Gillen in a scheduled eight-round contest.

The 24-year-old is already mandatory challenger to the vacant Midlands title, but a suitable co-contender has yet to be found. Clarke may end up bypassing that and going after English champion Jahmaine Smyle, from Leicester.

West Bromwich's Tom Stokes opened Saturday night's show and entered seventh heaven with a four-round victory over Lewis van Poetsch. He has been petitioned to box for the area middleweight title.

Four other bouts featured on this 'Summer Scorchers' show, presented by promoter Errol Johnson's Black Country Boxing outfit.

Unbeaten Craig Morris, from Ludlow in Shropshire, outpointed Lithuanian Arvydas Trizno 60-54 in a light middleweight six-rounder. Solihull's Jordan Clayton was penalised but was still an easy winner over four rounds against Russian-born Andrej Capur.

Birmingham's Luke Walker threw the kitchen sink at Dan Blackwell, the brother of Chris Eubank Junior's opponent Nick. Victory was his by a 39-38 points call.

There was nothing technical about the shoot out between Coventry's James Montgomery and Brummie Dwayne Sheldon, which ended with the second round just 12 seconds old.

Montgomery had already been down from a stiff right hook and, once more, dropped his hands to be clobbered again with a right hook. Sheldon resumed his attacks looking for the finish.

Runners among the prizes on forest's very muddy course

ATHLETES from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club were among the prizes at the weekend in Bewdley at the Wyre Forest Half Marathon.

With the race taking place on fire tracks and forest paths over undulating terrain, the 13.1 mile course was a real test of both strength and stamina, particularly with its uphill finish and recent rainfall turning the underfoot conditions muddy, adding further difficulties to an already difficult course.

Dave Norman continued his return to form finishing in 12th place in 1.33.47, Mark Homer came home in 1.38.22 to take 23rd place and claim 1st MV55, Helen Tromans bagged a personal best over the course of more than three minutes taking 32nd place in 1.41.44 and claiming third lady prize, less than 30 seconds behind 2nd place. Graham Wildgoose was 88th in 1.52.45, Andy Morrison was 114th in 1.58.33, Andy Weaver was 126th in 2.00.30, Karen Doy finished in 2.06.04 to take 152nd place, Lyn Sprague was not far behind 2.06.50 in 157th, Russell Fox was 174th in 2.10.47 and Liz Hettle was 229th in 2.23.48.

Riders face mountainous challenge



Some of the athletes who rode La Marmotte

A CONTINGENT of Black Country Triathletes travelled to France and Italy to take on two different cycling sportives.

Lee Moreton, Andy Southall, Mark Southall, Rob Kennard, Dave Evans, Mark Evans, Martin Dodd, Mike Anslow, Matt Price, Nigel Bolton, Paul Silk and Tim Lake travelled to Alpe d'Huez to take on the epic Marmotte Sportive.

La Marmotte features three mountain climbs over its 174km route and has a total of 5,180m of climbing. The final ascent is 21 hairpin bends.

Elsewhere, Pat Hackett and Cheryl and Tim Blewitt took on the mountains of Italy in the Maratona des Dolomites (Dolomites Marathon),

Triathlon

an annual single-day road bicycle race covering seven spectacular mountain passes and one of the biggest Italian Granfondo bicycle races.

Back home, Dave Nash competed in the UK Ultimate Half triathlon at Dearnford Lake, Shropshire finishing 10th overall and second in age group following a 1.2 mile swim, 56 mile bike and a 13.1 mile run. Lauren Evans raced in the Peak District Challenge triathlon at Chatsworth finishing as the 30th overall female and sixth in age group in the Standard distance race.

Heathens get the better of their rivals

CRADLEY climbed up to second in the National League table with a convincing 52-38 home win over arch-rivals Mildenhall at Monmore Green.

The rivalry between the two clubs was reignited last month when the Heathens' trip to West Row was postponed following a dispute over the visitors' line-up. However, Will Pottinger's side ensured they gained on-track bragging rights with another strong all-round team display to extend their winning run to four successive competitive meetings.

Monmore masterclasses from dominant top two Ashley Morris and Max Clegg ensured they were never troubled by the Fen Tigers.

Morris equalled his National League track record in the opening race to give his side the lead. Heathens never looked back as they edged clear thanks to another determined performance from Bradley Andrews. The New Zealand-born youngster had a hectic evening with seven rides but he was involved in their first four heat advantages to ensure they seized the upper hand.

He also protected their advantage with victory in heat two after partner Layne Cupitt fell and demonstrated plenty of composure to force a mistake from Alfie Bowtell as he challenged for third on the final bend of heat four.

Morris and Clegg struck maximums in heats 13 and 15 to ensure Mildenhall left empty-handed. Morris required a brave move to round the battling Connor Coles on the opening bend of heat 10, whilst Clegg earned a full maximum in comprehensive fashion.

Richard Andrews continued his impressive start with the Heathens to bag double figures and claim the flag with a classy heat eight ride. Luke Chessell added an important paid eight though plagued by mechanical problems. Youngster Cupitt hit the deck three times but his side gained an important victory.

So Spa so good as Glassboys hit four

LEAMINGTON 1 STOURBRIDGE 4 CHRIS Lait scored twice as Stourbridge opened their pre-season with a fine away win. Recent signings Jack Duggan and Jake Heath featured for the Glassboys, while former Albion man Kayelden Brown was included by the visitors.

Joe Magunda put Leamington ahead but his strike was quickly matched by Lait, who then found Heath as Glassboys took the lead. Gary Hackett's men forged ahead as Lait latched onto Heath's deflected shot. Trialist Brad Birch added the fourth.

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FIFTY-SEVEN years after conquering the Ben Nevis Mountain Race in Scotland and being crowned 'The Ben Men', four former Tipton Harriers enjoyed a belated reunion.

Pete Boxley, Eric Silk, Tony Fern and Roy Poultny met up again at the Quality Hotel in Dudley.

Tipton Harriers were founded in 1910 and in that time countless athletes have donned the green and white. This was the first time they had sent athletes to compete at a fell race.

Fern, 80, now coaches at Southampton Athletics Club, and was back in the region to oversee his young athletes at the Sutton Coldfield National Relay event, while Poultny, also 80, now of London, was making one of his regular trips to the Black Country.

Boxley, of Oakham who worked at the former Bean Cars factory, said: "It didn't take long at all for all of the old tales and memories to come out."

"There were just short of 100 runners that day and I completed the climb of 4,400 feet and back down in two hours and 14 minutes - I was first back out of the four of us."

"Eric was three minutes later and Roy one minute after that. Tony did it in two hours 40."

"It was a nice holiday in the end. We had a week off and we camped for a few days before the event. Our friend Ray Thorpe came but didn't compete - he was probably the best runner too!"

Former hospital worker Silk, who lives in Netherton, returned the next year with Poultny and two other former Harriers, John Severn and Alan Whittle.

Silk said: "I was coming down the second time and was near the bottom on a fairly wide track that swept round the edge of a hill with a sharp left and right like a chicane. We were running full-pelt and instead of sticking to the path I went a little further on the grass and realised it was a mistake."

"I tripped and fell face-first and hit my head off a rock, losing my glasses. I was definitely out cold and judging by my finishing time it could've been for a good five minutes - there was nobody around to help."



The four at Ben Nevis, from left, Pete Boxley, Tony Fern, Eric Silk and Roy Poultny



Back together again - it's reunion time for the fabulous four, Boxley, Fern, Silk and Poultny



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